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A MEMOIR

By his Son
J. ERNEST DAVEY
M.A., B.D.

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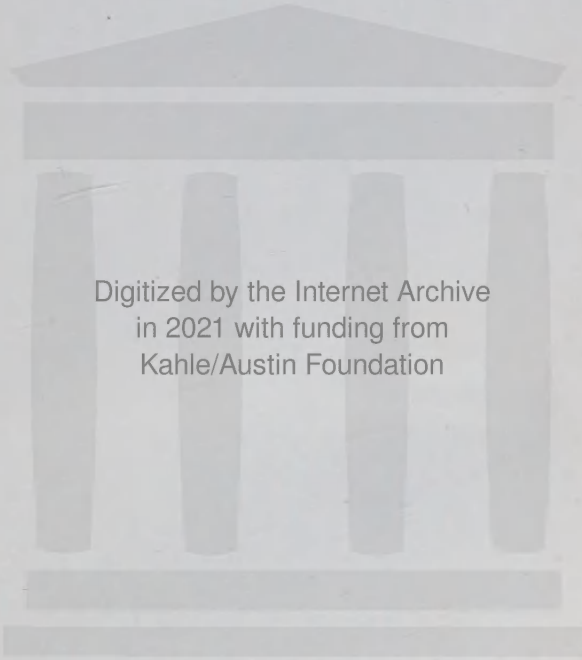

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A MEMOIR of THE REVEREND CHARLES DAVEY OF BELFAST :: :: D.D.

Written by his Son

J. ERNEST DAVEY, M.A., B.D.

Professor of Church History
General Assembly's College, Belfast
Fellow of King's College, Cambridge

With a Foreword by the
REV. PROFESSOR JAMES HAIRE, M.A., B.D.

BELFAST
M'CAW, STEVENSON & ORR, LIMITED
The Linenhall Press
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The Linenhall Press
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FOREWORD

I HAVE been asked to write a few words of preface to this life-story of the Rev. Dr. Davey, one of the best ministers our Church in Ireland has ever had. It was my good fortune to become his assistant shortly after I became a licentiate. It was then the closing period of his wonderful ministry in St. Enoch's. What an inspiring sight it was to see that great church, with its two galleries rising one above the other, crowded morning and evening with eager, earnest worshippers! When Mr. Davey entered the pulpit, a thrill of expectancy seemed to run through the audience. Here was a man with a real message! The intense earnestness of his words and the look of solemn awe on his face also contributed to carry the hearer into the very presence of the Eternal. What David Hume said of John Brown seemed to me to be true of Charles Davey—"He spoke as if God were right at his elbow." The two essential notes of good preaching, reality and simplicity, were always present. He surpassed almost any preacher I have known in the power of his appeal. The last ten minutes of his sermon were often among the most impressive pulpit utterances I have ever listened to.

But Charles Davey was more than an earnest preacher,—he was also a devoted and painstaking pastor.

What was said of another well-known minister was equally true of him: his pastoral work was even more remarkable than his preaching. Every Monday morning, at half-past nine, no matter how busy the Sunday had been, he met with his assistant and the congregational missionary to consider and apportion the work of the coming week. At these meetings his first thought was always the visitation of the sick and the care of the poor. And right through the week, in season and out of season, early and late, he was assiduous in his attentions to his people. All this involved intense and arduous labour, and cost him more than many of us imagined. But it was one of the secrets of his far-reaching influence, and of the strong ties of love and affection which bound so many people to him.

Such unremitting and successful labours required to be fed from secret fountains. No man can continue to be an interesting and impressive preacher as he was without earnest study and meditation. Only those who knew Dr. Davey intimately realised the extent of his reading, or the diligence with which he toiled in his study. He was familiar with the great books of our literature, and in his study one of these masters was never far away. In later years he was deeply interested in theology, and had an intimate acquaintance with modern movements. His passion for knowledge was intense. He scarcely ever went out without a book in his pocket, and in tramcar and train he was often to be found poring over some recent publication.

His work for the pulpit was done with the minutest care; no part of the service was neglected in his preparation. Impressive as was his preaching, his prayers were no less impressive. There was always about them

what the old writers called the "note of unction," and yet few knew that in many cases every word was carefully written out beforehand, though the prayer as actually spoken might differ considerably from this model which had been prepared as a guide to thought.

What a tireless worker he was! To me he seemed to be always studying, always visiting, always preparing, always praying. These various exertions were concentrated on one fixed purpose—the winning of men and women for the Kingdom. His was a dedicated life. When a young man, he had been carried captive by the beauty of Jesus, and from that day his life was given over to the one task of constraining others to see the same beauty. This sense of dedication to the noblest never left him. It continued to be the master-passion till the close of his life.

He was a great gift to our Irish Church, a Church which he loved with all his heart and served with all his strength. He has left behind him a memory of untiring devotion to inspire us all to better and more faithful service.

JAMES HAIRE.

COLLEGE PARK,
22nd October, 1921.

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A MEMOIR OF THE REV. CHARLES DAVEY, D.D. OF BELFAST

CHAPTER I

BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION

"WELL, what did you think of him?" The question was addressed by an enthusiastic member of one of our Belfast congregations to a visitor whom he had brought with him to church that evening, and with whom he was now walking homeward after the service; and it had reference of course to the preacher whom they had just heard. "I didn't think of him at all," was the unexpected reply; "I could only think of myself." The minister in question was none other than the honoured servant of God whose name stands upon the title-page of this memoir, and the answer just quoted is surely a most perfect tribute to the spiritual grace and power of one whose memory will not soon pass, and to his unique gifts as a spokesman of the eternal Gospel of the blessed God.

The rôle of the present writer in reference to the pages which follow is more often that of editor than

author. The material used has, for the most part, been collected and arranged by my mother, who is therefore in the truest sense the author of the book. I certainly do not wish that any of the credit due to another should by mistake be given to me, especially as the heavy end of the burden has been borne by her throughout in the preparation of this sketch of one whom she knew better than did any other living soul. The book itself is, in part, the fulfilment of an insistent demand made by a large public that something more or less permanent should be given to them as a memoir of a great life now passed beyond the veil; and in part it is the fulfilment of a hope of Dr. Davey himself, once or twice expressed, that the story of his life might somehow be given to young men who were interested in the Kingdom of God, as an encouragement to them to give themselves to the definite work of that kingdom by entering the ministry of the Church. Dr. Davey's handicaps in the matter of circumstances were probably as great as those of any such, and he believed that the tangible proof that victory might be achieved, spite of adverse conditions, if will and enthusiasm to overcome were present, would, in itself, be a help towards obtaining for the work of the Church men fitted to do that work well, who might be deterred by practical difficulties in their way. These pages, then, are offered not only as a wreath of remembrance, but as an incentive and encouragement to others to whom may come the call to serve God in the way of spiritual ministry.

The difficulties in preparing this short review of a very full and intense life have been great. Dr. Davey's modesty seldom allowed him to refer at all to his work; he would not talk of it, except very occasionally by way

of retrospect, so that even those who knew him best learned little of his work from his own lips. Moreover, he has left little relevant correspondence; he himself was no great letter-writer at any time, and the letters of others he does not seem to have kept, with the exception of a few. Being thus reduced largely to the memories of others, we found in the course of our search that many of the most important of these for our purpose, especially with reference to the great work of his earlier manhood, were already dead or too old to give us great assistance, others out of the country or otherwise inaccessible, and so forth. General impressions were easy to get, and these were uniformly enthusiastic and warm with affection and gratitude, but the distinctive details which add so much of interest and variety to a personal memoir were often not to be had. For these and other defects in the pages which follow we can only ask the reader's indulgence; the record we have to give is a great one, but we have the saddening assurance that it might so easily have been fuller and more inspiring if the personal touches of memory had been more frequently available.

Finally, we return our sincere thanks to a vast circle of friends who have given us help orally or in writing in the preparation of this volume; some few are referred to by name in the body of the book, but we hope that all will take to themselves these scant but genuine words of grateful appreciation for their assistance in preparing this brief memoir of Dr. Davey's life and work.

CHAPTER II

BOYHOOD AND AWAKENING

The child is father of the man

It was on the 9th April, 1857, at the old farming homestead of Leefield, about two miles north-east of the ancient town of Carrickfergus, that Charles Davey first saw the light. The house, which has long since given way to a more modern structure, occupied a prominent position on the face of the hillside, and commanded a magnificent view of Belfast Lough and its surroundings; and the beauty of that picture never departed from the inner vision of the boy who so often drank it in, even when in later years the great city near-by had well-nigh swallowed up his whole time and being. Belfast, the city in question, was twelve miles away, with its tall chimneys by day and its twinkling harbour lights by night ever proclaiming its swarming and busy life. By the farmers the city was regarded mainly as a market for their produce; and little did this young son of the soil think at that time that he was destined to take so large a place in its religious life in days to come, and to do so much to shape the destinies of many of its inhabitants. The panorama of coast and city was a romantic soul-stirring one, as was also the unending vista of the restless sea, stretching far away to the Isle of Man and

beyond it out of sight, and studded with white sails—for it was still the day of the "windjammer." Daily the young boy could see the merchant ships toiling up and down the Lough in the calmer weather under heavy sails, passing to and from all the lands of the earth, and bearing the world's riches with them; or, again, driven in by the storm with broken masts or rudder, torn sails and battered sides, to seek refuge in the Roads under the shelter of Knockagh Hill. On the far side of Belfast Lough he could watch the growth of the young towns of Bangor and Holywood, and compare them with the unchanging old town of Carrickfergus, which seemed to be satisfied with the ancient glory of its historic castle, which dates from Norman times, and the more partisan glory of its famous harbour stone, upon which William III. set his foot first when he landed on Irish soil.

In Miskimmin's *History of Carrickfergus* the Daveys are one of the few families mentioned by name as long settled in that neighbourhood. It was generally believed that the family had come from North Wales in the early part of the sixteenth century, in the dawn of the Reformation; and uncertain tradition has it that one member of the connexion had actually achieved the distinction of being hanged,—so adding, at this safe distance, a peculiar lustre to the family tree. The immigrants settled in the neighbourhood of Carrickfergus, and soon became prominent members of the community. As farmers they seem to have given special attention to cattle-breeding, and, in later years at least, it is certain that they carried off many prizes both for their cattle and for their skill with the plough. The immediate forefathers of Charles Davey were a fine, stalwart race of men,

some of them being noted for their great height. His great-grandfather, commonly known as "big Sam," was a massive man, standing over six feet three inches; his father, Charles, was well over six feet, and his son inherited the ancestral physique. Charles Davey senior, the father, was a stern, honest man, who had no patience with anything shoddy or shady in matters of work or business; and in that spirit of uprightness the family were trained, as also in the principle of prompt obedience. His mother, Margaret Wilson, belonged to a neighbouring family. She was small, alert, good-looking, and of a highly-strung nervous temperament. One of her sisters, Dr. Davey's aunt Nancy, was a woman of keen mind and fond of serious reading, who had quarried deep into the problems of life; and many a talk the young Charles had and enjoyed with her. In later days he spoke of these talks as the beginning of his own intellectual enthusiasm and love of reading.

Charles was the youngest of five children, having three brothers and one sister older than himself. He was a gentle, sensitive, retiring boy, but full of life, health, and humour. All his days he had a strong and lasting love for everything connected with his home and for his early acquaintances. His freedom from the ordinary faults of youth was a thing noticeable to all who knew him. He was never known to throw a stone at a bird on his way to school. His mother said he never did anything wrong, so far as she could remember; certainly she had never had to punish him. He was educated at National Schools till he was fourteen years of age—first at Loughmorne, then at Sullatober, and finally at the Model School in Carrickfergus. The Loughmorne School premises being within the catch-

ment area of their water supply, were taken over by the Belfast Water Commissioners some years ago and demolished; and thus there was lost to all but memory the little room so dear to Dr. Davey's heart, not only as his first school, but as the building where, later, he taught the children in the Sabbath-school or preached to crowded audiences the message that had delivered his own soul.

For two years, from fourteen to sixteen, he remained at home to help with the farm. In those days of free imports farming was not very profitable work, and, spite of hard and constant toil, few of the farmers managed to earn more than a bare subsistence. The experience of those strenuous years, however, gave him an interest in all things connected with country life, which he carried with him to the end of his days, a source of refreshment amid the dust and hurry of cities. Of these early days he was never ashamed, and often he would talk of them and of all he owed to them. As a small boy he had earned his first money by selling the eggs laid by a hen which a neighbour had given him; later on his father gave him a lamb, and then a second, both of which he reared and sold to advantage. Such was his introduction to the business side of life. But the prospects offered by farming were in those days far from bright, and having a friend in the carpentering trade, which promised both a more immediate return and a more prosperous future, the young Charles, at the age of sixteen, entered upon his apprenticeship to that business. Always diligent and receptive, he soon became proficient; and had he chosen to remain in that business he had every prospect of standing well, not merely as a workman, but as a master. But he never liked it, and in the light of after

years the reason is clear. His heart was in other things; he was naturally a student, and a divine discontent was upon him which was drawing him all unwitting to his true life-work. Even while continuing his trade, he began about this time to promote his further education by private lessons in the evenings. He was feeling after a larger life, and, indeed, the time was near, but the soul's awakening must first come, and till then, the carpenter's bench was his destiny.

The cleansing fires of the 1859 revival, which had so abundantly blessed the North of Ireland, were re-awakened by the Belfast visit of D. L. Moody in 1874. Thousands from all parts of the surrounding country felt the divine touch, and returned home renewed in spirit to live out their gospel, and to tell what things the grace of God had done for them as opportunity might offer. Thus, as one result of Mr. Moody's mission, cottage meetings were instituted in the Carrickfergus neighbourhood, in order that the fire which had been kindled from above might be kept alight and spread yet further.

Charles attended some of these meetings, and at the age of seventeen he was brought thereby under a deep conviction of sin. To his thoughtful and sensitive nature the burden was unbearable and the battle very sore; and friends who watched him during those days feared that he would lose his reason. The God he sought was indeed not far off, but the time of revelation was not yet. In prayer he agonised with the unseen, night and day; he read the Bible morning and evening, at the bench, at meal-times, or whenever opportunity could be seized, as only those can read who know that they are at the end of their own strength, and that God must reveal himself or they perish. Till he should find peace there could be

no rest for his spirit; and at last, in the night of storm, God spake the word that made a great calm. The young seeker entered into the inner meaning of the Cross of Jesus Christ; against its background he realised aright his own sin and the grace of God, and by that grace he now was enabled in his own experience to lay hold of and test the great evangelical truth that the Eternal God has taken upon himself the whole intolerable weight of man's sin, and that man, humbled and repentant, may go forth from the secret of that Presence forgiven, erect and free, but henceforth the willing bond-slave of the Love that redeemed him. From that moment the struggle and the fear, the burden and the unrest, were things of the past for him into whose soul the peace and power of God had come; but life could no longer be what it had been. Eternal values had been realised in the light of the Great White Throne and of Calvary's tree, and the realisation had transformed all things. From that day of salvation Charles Davey had no will but the will of his Lord, and with all the intensity of his nature he dedicated to God all that he was or had. Nor could he bury within his own heart the secret he had found; he must needs tell it to others. The day of his conversion was thus the day of his anointing as the evangelist of Jesus Christ.

His new-born desire to serve his Master, in whatever way he could, received warm encouragement at this time from a friend in the district whom he had met at some of the cottage meetings, and with whom he had had a number of earnest talks. The friend was Mr. John Stuart, a native of Loughmorne, and afterwards a merchant in Queen's Square, Belfast, who was an active Christian worker in the district, and henceforth a close

friend of Mr. Davey. In after years this Mr. Stuart joined St. Enoch's Church in Belfast, where he became closely identified with the flourishing work in the Sabbath-schools and Christian Endeavour Society, and the other activities of that church, under the pastorate of his erst-while friend of the cottage meetings; and when Dr. Davey passed to Fisherwick he followed him there, and became an elder of that church, remaining in its member-ship till his death in 1914. To return, however, to our subject: Mr. Stuart, who was a firm believer in cottage-meeting work, induced the young man to take part in the meetings around his own neighbourhood. Dr. Davey often told of that first meeting when, as a lad, he spoke to about six old women, feeling very shy and nervous, but none the less enthusiastic and eager to declare the things he knew. Even at that age he manifested a great aptitude for the work of evangelism, and his services were much sought after. For three years, then, he con-tinued to work at his trade, to improve his education, and to carry on the active Christian work of these meet-ings in his own neighbourhood. But his heart was in the business of winning men and women to a new life by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and that desire could not long be denied its true place in his day's work. The fulfilment of this desire brings us to the beginning of a new chapter in his life, which will fittingly make a new chapter in this record.

SERMON ECHOES

I

THE doctrine of human love must often precede the doctrine of God's grace.

Men don't seem nearly so large when we know God.

They who live the life of the worm, and elect to do so, must some day be trodden underfoot.

The Church, I fear, loses a great deal of her vitality by looking too intently at difficulties; the heart is taken out of her again and again by giving too much heed to the report of her ten unfaithful spies.

A man who can settle matters without God is a godless man.

The infidel is often like a boy in the dark who whistles to keep up his spirits.

Don't repeat that prayer you have repeated twenty years till it conveys no meaning to your mind; tell God in your own natural words your wants, your fears, and your longings.

Conscience has kept a diary; it would be well to go alone with it and see how we stand.

Salvation is eternal fellowship with God and fitness for it.

CHAPTER III

EVANGELIST AND STUDENT

His Word was as a fire in my bones

THE balance, as I have said, was steadily shifting in the young man's mind towards a complete surrender of his time to the work of preaching Christ to men. From the beginning he seems to have been sure of his own vocation, but he wished, not unnaturally, to have it recognised by others. He went to his own minister to talk things over, and if possible to get his approval in the matter of his seeking the definite Christian work of evangelism. Always humble-minded and retiring, he probably was over-modest in his claims, perhaps even awkward and ill at ease in the presence of one who must have seemed his judge; at all events, he failed to impress the minister in question, and the latter's dictum was, "Young man, go back to your bench." Fortunately the young man did not believe in the infallibility of clergymen; and, though the sentence must have been depressing, his sense of vocation was too strong to be so quickly and easily strangled. At last the opening came which he longed for. The report of his gifts and work had reached Mr. James Barton of Dundalk, then the Honorary Secretary of the Irish Evangelisation Society. Mr. Barton, impressed by what he had learned, wrote and

asked him to become an agent of the Society. Charles Davey took the call of Mr. Barton as the call of God—and the event has shown that it was so—and commenced work under him in September 1878. He left his tools all unheeded where they lay in the workshop, never even asking what became of them, and went forth to do the work his heart had yearned after. In the books of the Irish Evangelisation Society the entry of his name still stands as "Charles Davey, carpenter." It is the only surviving record of that page of his life—a page he was glad to turn. So, like another and a greater Carpenter, he went forth from the bench when his hour was come to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom, and gladly, for his heart was set upon the winning of human souls.

From the first it was evident that he had great power as a speaker, and during the years that he laboured for that Society he was recognised as one of its best and most successful agents. One of the future elders of his last charge—the congregation of Fisherwick—remembers, at a Belfast prayer-meeting in these early days, being told that there was a young Mr. Davey also present who was a splendid preacher. There were few places in the North of Ireland that he did not visit, from the town of Newcastle to the town of Donegal, and to this day hundreds of men and women testify to the power from above which came into their lives as a result of his preaching. Indeed, it was quite a common occurrence long afterwards, when taking a service for a brother minister in one of his old preaching stations, to have one and another coming up to tell him of how in the past he had been the means of their spiritual awakening. All notices of his work agree in testifying to his persuasive

and winning presentation of the Christian message, and to the yearning for souls which spoke in everything he did. How many lives were changed directly by his work we have no means of computing; only the life beyond will declare that; but I do not think there could be any exaggeration in putting it high among the hundreds. At this long remove from these labours, and by reason of Dr. Davey's own reticence, we can only gather general impressions of that work and its results, except here and there where individual conversions have left a lasting mark, or where individual memories have still been possible to obtain; but one is forced to recognise the stupendous character of the activity of those years in the ingathering of the sheaves into the Kingdom. Since the great days of 1859 the missions in which Mr. Davey took part, along with Mr. Irvine or Mr. Robert Montgomery, were the times of the greatest spiritual quickening the North of Ireland, as a whole, had known; the breath of the Spirit of God was upon the whole country side. Something like a true impression of the work he did at this time may be gathered from the few samples which it has been possible to secure out of the many places visited, if only the reader will remember that they are but samples.

A list of the places visited would read rather like an inventory of the smaller provincial towns of Ulster. We have been able to trace his footsteps in places like Aghadoey, Garvagh, Ahoghill, Doagh, Ballyclare, Ballyeaston, Dundonald, Ballymiscaw, Saintfield, Newtownards, Killinchy, Newcastle, Loughgall, Cookstown, Limavady, Donegal; but these are only a few of the localities in which lasting work was done at this time. In Killinchy the local clergymen were out of sympathy

with his work at his first appearance, but the meetings none the less were crowded. When, a few years later, he went back for a second mission, the ministers gave him a warm welcome. The results of the work there are to be found to this day, and the memories of that great spiritual visitation are still vivid. One interesting case of conversion was that of a young man who is now a missionary in China of many years' standing; another, that of a notorious drunkard who became a fine Christian worker; but, as usual, most of the individual results have been lost sight of in the mist of years. At Newtownards he had a most successful mission; and even when he last preached there, shortly before his death, one and another came forward to tell him how, through him, they had been led to Christ's feet. One of the leading business men in a provincial town told a friend of Dr. Davey some years ago, that, as a young man, he had been led to God by his preaching. The gentleman in question is now an elder of the Presbyterian Church, a Sabbath-school superintendent, and admittedly the most strenuous Christian worker in the district. And what is true of that town is true of many another in the North of Ireland; its leading church workers date their interest in Christian service from their contact with the evangelism of Charles Davey. The meetings held in "The Happy Valley," near Ahoghill, "were attended by vast crowds, many of whom tramped for miles to be present, and the savour of those days still abides unforgotten, not a few yet alive dating their spiritual life from them; and some of the addresses he gave are still, after thirty years, written vividly upon the memories of those who heard them." All speak of the power of his message, the winsomeness and transparent sincerity of his personality;

but as one correspondent has written, "it was the man, more than anything he said or did, which impressed those who met him." From many a quarter has come the same testimony; it was character which gave his message its power and appeal; the character, as one who heard him at Doagh has said, of a "real Christian and a perfect gentleman," kind, strong, wise, tender, fervent, sympathetic, and ready to help at whatever cost; and this character, making its way into voice, gesture, and bearing, opened the door into many a reluctant heart. In Belfast, too, he held many meetings during these days, notably at Gooseberry Corner, in Ballymacarrett, where much fruitful work was done which has stood the test of time.

At Garvagh he had first been urged by the clergyman he stayed with to study for the ministry, but now one and another brought forward the same suggestion, and the desire to carry it out grew strong. There were, however, some difficulties in the way. He had only a National School education, and he was resolved to be no burden on his parents. But, on the other hand, he had a stout heart, a good constitution, a keen mind, and a strong faith. So he set to work while still in the service of the Irish Evangelisation Society, and within six months he had passed his matriculation into the Royal University. He then severed his connection with the Society, except for some summer work in the years immediately following, entered Queen's College, Belfast, in 1880, and during his whole course never missed an examination. He preached almost every Sabbath, but when he had a Sunday free he attended Fisherwick Place Church, then under the pastoral care of Dr. Williamson. His connection with this congregation is interesting for two

reasons: in the first place, it was to be his own church in days to come; and in the second place, his future wife, Miss Margaret Beatty, then at Victoria College in Belfast, was at that very time a member of the same congregation, though their acquaintanceship was still in the future. Between the college sessions he and Mr. Robert Montgomery together undertook evangelistic work, at first for the Irish Evangelisation Society, and later on for our General Assembly as their accredited evangelists, studying all the time at every possible opportunity. Their work as Assembly evangelists was chiefly in the three towns of Ballymena, Cookstown, and Ballymoney, in each of which they conducted one or more lengthy and unforgotten missions, working by day and preaching at night. To these missions I now turn.

In 1882 Mr. Davey and Mr. Montgomery went to Ballymena, and for six weeks in the summer the evangelists' tent, holding about two thousand, was filled to overflowing every night. It was an extraordinary time of great blessing, and the fruits of the work done are still very manifest, most of the present Christian workers of the district being among those who were brought to a decision at that time. Indeed, it was so elsewhere also; bands of Christian workers were raised up in connection with Mr. Davey's evangelistic work in almost every part of the North to do the work of the churches in their generation. A member of his first Belfast congregation who was brought up in Ballymena recalls those days in a letter, and tells how even on the 12th July, the great holiday of Protestant Ulster in honour of the Orange celebration of the victory of the Boyne, when Ballymena was crowded with holiday-makers from

a distance, the tent could hardly accommodate those who sought admission. One Sabbath morning during that visit he preached in First Ballymena Presbyterian Church, and it is a fact worthy of record, as an evident testimony to the spiritual impress left by that Ballymena visit, that five years later he was called to that church without having been heard at all in the meantime.

The two next went to Cookstown, where they had a most memorable mission. One old friend writes from there, "Night after night, for seven weeks, they proclaimed the Gospel to a thousand people, and God owned and blessed their work in a wonderful way. They also conducted three services on Sundays, the people coming from great distances round about. Whole families in some cases were brought into the Kingdom of God, many of whom devoted their lives to Christian service at home, while others, having gone to lands beyond the sea, are serving God faithfully there." Such is the warm but meagre statement which we have been able to glean of a great and abiding work; but with such knowledge we must be content until the veil shall be lifted, and the results of earth's labours fully disclosed at the last. Dr. Davey himself never cared for or encouraged statistics in work of this kind, but the lack of more detailed information is a want in our story which we can but regret.

In 1883 the same two evangelists held tent services in Ballymoney, and of them a friend has written, "From the commencement these services were very successful, and much blessing followed the preaching of the Word. Towards the close, the meetings became so large that they were transferred to First Ballymoney Presbyterian Church, where fifteen or sixteen hundred persons came

every night. The effect of these meetings had not died when Mr. Davey, with his friend, Robert Mayne Irvine, came back in the summer of 1886. The interest was even greater that year, and a wave of spiritual blessing swept over the town and district. One special feature of the work was the large number of young men who were brought to Christ. It is now nearly thirty-four years since these last services, and there are still some in and around the town, and many scattered over the world, who point to these times as the date of their spiritual birth." Another friend writes, "The fragrance of the memory of that happy time still lingers." Rev. J. D. Osborne, D.D., now of Dublin, with whom Mr. Davey stayed in Ballymoney during that mission, says, "Memory only brings back to me the broad impressions left by that remarkable time. I recall vividly, however, one characteristic of your husband's pleading with his audiences for God; viz., the winsomeness of his words and personality. He truly had the 'wooing note' throughout all his messages. Hearts opened to him and his presentation of his Divine Lord under a kind of irresistible persuasiveness. It was the spirit of Christ at work in a nature filled with love, and in deep earnest to win men and women for the King of Love. It was most interesting to note, too, how admirably Mr. Montgomery and Mr. Davey fitted into each other's personalities, each the complement of the other, making thereby the combined message peculiarly complete and effective." Another friend, speaking of services they had held elsewhere, refers to the same complementary relation of the two evangelists. "Mr. Montgomery," he says, "who spoke first, roused and stirred the people, and then Mr. Davey came with his winsome and loving Gospel, and they just

flocked into the Kingdom." One case, of which Mr. Davey heard particulars about nine years later, will serve to illustrate the quality and the permanence of the work which was done in such manifold measure at this time in the regeneration of human life. A man in a village of the Route district, who had been a very wild character and a great drinker, and was by profession a dog-trainer —a calling which did not provide him with a helpful environment — heard Mr. Davey in Ballymoney one night during the mission there, and was converted. He gave up thereafter not only the drinking, but even the dog-training, as he found his occupation brought him into bad company; and at the time of our hearing of him he was a pedlar, keeping quite steady, and both he and his wife were earnest Christians.

It was these years of evangelistic work, above all, that made Charles Davey's name a household word throughout the North of Ireland; in every corner of Ulster his memory is still green, and his name is still daily blessed. About this same time we catch glimpses from our scanty records of work in Belfast, and there can be little doubt that his visits to the provincial towns were punctuated by spells of work in the churches or mission-halls of the city: various references are left us to these mission-halls, and in particular to old "Hermon Hall," but the details are missing. In this same year Mr. Moody returned to Belfast, and Mr. Davey was among the band of helpers who dealt with inquirers in the after-meetings. It was in such work that his personality had its fullest scope; his sympathy and his yearning for the souls of men gave him an exceptional power for such service, and his tact enabled him to say the right thing in the right way. Many a man who came to Christ

by means of such talks has spoken of the absence of all crude or jarring notes in his questions or words of counsel; he could not easily offend the sincere searcher after God, for his great sympathy helped him to visualize the other man's point of view, and to stand in his place as few evangelists have been able to do. Of the total numerical results of his preaching in these first years of his Christian evangelism we cannot speak with accuracy, but probably not less than a thousand, and quite possibly a great many more than that number, owed their rebirth in spiritual things to his public work at that time. One lady said to me a short time ago that, "in Ballymena alone, hundreds were converted during the mission of 1882." It was about this time that he had an attack of congestion of the lungs; it seized upon him on Sunday after a severe wetting; but, tenacious as ever of his work, he did not retire to bed till the evening service was over, in spite of all his difficulty in breathing and speaking. It was an index to the spirit of one who never chose the easy path, but ever gave full measure of his powers.

His first theological session was taken in the Assembly's College, Belfast, and in that same year (1884) he graduated in the Royal University, taking his degree in the honour course in Philosophy and Political Economy. The degree was conferred on him *in absentia*, as he was by that time on his way across the Atlantic, having gone for his second theological session to Union Theological Seminary, New York. His professors there were Drs. Schaff, Hitchcock, Shedd, and Briggs, a goodly company; but of them all he most enjoyed Boswell Hitchcock, and used to tell of the sheer native eloquence to which at times he rose in the discussion of some great man or moment in the history of the Church.

On arriving at New York he joined Dr. John Hall's congregation, but on occasions he would go also to hear Henry Ward Beecher, Talmage, and other well-known preachers of the New World. After the busy life he had lived, however, he did not care that even part of his week should be idle, so he gave in his name to Fifth Avenue Church as one who was willing to do any Christian work that might be required of him. But nobody seemed to need him: they knew, of course, nothing of him or his work in Ireland, and he was not the man to push himself forward. In the end he set out to find work for himself, and found it in the back streets of New York, where he worked quietly for a considerable time. Even his closest friends in the city knew little or nothing of this work, but one of the most intimate has written as follows: "Mr. Davey had not been long in the seminary—perhaps only a couple of months—when he discovered, amidst a network of lanes and sordid streets in the 'down-town' purlieus of New York, an opening for aggressive Christian work after his own heart. As there was no monetary temptation of any kind to offer, and even very little practical sympathy, you will be able to visualize the situation and follow this heroic volunteer as he plunges into the back streets of New York, five nights a week, just because his heart is afire with love to God and to degraded men. If ever there was a human being who believed in the Gospel of the grace of God as a sovereign remedy for all the sorrows and sins of earth, that man was my class-fellow in New York. From a worldly standpoint he did not make a cent out of this terribly exhausting toil, and had even to defray all incidental expenses; but, plainly, he was completely overworked, and I fear that this nightly crusade

in a strange land, with all its harassing accompaniments, was one of the contributory causes of his nervous breakdowns in the last decades of his life. But you will ask, what was the outcome of that singularly unselfish campaign for Christ? My friend was so invincibly modest that I could not get full information from him. I heard enough, however, to be able to say that God was glorified in the conversion of many souls, and I am justified in saying that that district is still reaping, in this present generation, the harvest of those months. There will be a happy meeting some day between that sower and all his spiritual children, but I should specially like to be there, if ever I win my way through, to see the greeting given to that sower by his children from yonder streets away in the distant West."

In some of this work Mr. Davey laboured in co-operation with Mr. Samuel Sims, now of Bethany Church, Belfast; and Mr. Sims has corroborated generally the foregoing letter. Their work, he informs us, was chiefly in a low artisan quarter of New York, not actually a slum, but a part of the city which could only be reached by passing through the most unsavoury spots of the New York slums. Mr. Sims has added his verbal tribute to the memory of his fellow-worker of those days, and especially with reference to the energy with which Mr. Davey threw himself into his theological work, despite all the difficulties created by the practical evangelistic activities already referred to. Twenty lessons behind the class in Hebrew when he arrived, Mr. Davey, he tells us, covered, between 20th October and Christmas, the whole of Davidson's Hebrew Grammar and the first three chapters of Genesis —usually regarded as a good session's work. Mr. Sims has also told us of other mission work done by his fellow-

student during this stay in New York—missions of a week's duration at a time; and further, that Mr. Davey took a class for a while in a Sabbath-school connected with the De Witt Memorial Church. It was, indeed, a full and strenuous existence for the young theological student, and is a clear witness to his evident enthusiasm in the service of God and man.

Then there came to him an unexpected invitation to another quarter of that great community. A North of Ireland lady who had lived in New York for many years, having heard of him through a sister in Belfast, asked him if he would come and give them his help on Statten Island. There was no church there, but a number of people were very anxious to have one if only they could get hold of the right man to start it. Mr. Davey agreed to come, and during the year he remained there (he was in America nearly eighteen months) he had charge of that congregation all the time, and its growth, numerical and spiritual, was an evident testimony to the good work he did in it. Of his influence at college a class-mate has written: "The influence he exercised was unconscious, but our whole class felt it. Our fellows felt instinctively that the man in him was greater than the student, and that all his words and acts —ay, his very smile—were indubitably sincere. We trusted him to a man." And an Irish friend who followed him across the Atlantic, in later years says: "When, eight years later, I studied in the same seminary in New York, I found his name fragrant, and gathered that he had made there the same impression as at home." Before returning to the old country, he visited some friends who had migrated to the States from Ireland, and was able to see some of the most beautiful of the

American scenery before the termination of this, his one visit to the New World.

His third theological year was taken in London, at the Presbyterian College in Queen's Square, now removed to Cambridge, one of his old professors, Dr. Gibb, being still alive when the present writer went up to that university in 1909. Professor Elmslie, beloved by all who knew him, was another of his professors, as was also Dr. Graham, of whom a great many humorous stories were told. One of these is, perhaps, worth reproducing here, as I am not sure that it has appeared elsewhere in print, and it is a story which Dr. Davey often told with relish. The students of the college were very fond of Dr. Graham's preaching, and used to go to hear him when opportunity offered. One student, who had gone three times in succession to hear him in different parts of London, was rewarded on each occasion by the same sermon. After the third service, he made his way to the vestry to tell Professor Graham that his students were in the habit of coming to hear him when they saw his name advertised, and he dwelt upon the fact that he had now heard him three times running, and each time from the text, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me?" The disconcerting answer of the preacher was to continue the passage, "and Peter was *grieved* when the Lord said unto him *the third time*, Lovest thou Me?" The student retired.

As usual, on coming to new surroundings, he looked for some practical Christian work which he might do; and he was soon given charge of a church at Bermondsey, and acted as its pastor all through the college session. He also engaged in mission work in various places, notably in the unpleasant neighbourhood (in those days)

of the Seven Dials. He sometimes spoke of the difficulty of that work,—the chief one being to get hold of people at all. On one occasion, after a house to house visitation, he had two hundred definite promises of attendance at a service in the evening, yet only seven turned up! In 1886, after his session was successfully over, he was licensed as a probationer for the ministry by the North London Presbytery. It is rather an interesting coincidence that one of the future elders in his last congregational charge of Fisherwick Church, Belfast, was present on that occasion, and saw him receive the authority of the Church to preach the Gospel of the grace of God.

His congregation in Bermondsey, who greatly valued his work, wished him to become their stated minister, but Mr. Davey and a close friend of the same college year, Robert Mayne Irvine, a man of saintly character, much beloved and an effective preacher, were requested by their Presbytery to do evangelistic work for them for six months. They consented, and made a tour of all the churches and mission districts within the ample bounds of the Presbytery, holding also special missions in Hull and Egremont. It was just about this time that the Rev. W. P. Mackay of Hull, author of *Grace and Truth*, was drowned, and Mr. Davey was invited to go there and preach in connection with the vacancy, but he did not go. It was the first of a number of openings which he had during the next twenty-five years for settling in England, but he never settled there; circumstances and the home pull, in the providence of God, led his footsteps to Ireland and kept him there: but this is anticipating events.

The work of the two friends was greatly blessed and

highly esteemed at this time, as extant records still bear witness in the Annual Reports of the Park Church, Highbury, the "Presbyterian Messenger" of the same congregation, the Minutes of the North London Presbytery, and, no doubt, many other annals upon which we have been unable to lay our hands. I quote typical extracts from them as follow: "From 7th to 13th June a series of special services was held at Harvey Street Mission, Hoxton [one of London's plague-spots in those days, though no longer living up to its reputation of last century], by Messrs. Davey and Irvine, under the authority of the North London Presbytery; the attendance was not so large as had been hoped for, but the amount of blessing was remarkably great." Again: "Special services for adults were held for ten days in February, which Mr. Davey conducted with great power and blessing." And again: "There has rarely been a series of special services in connection with our work among adults, which has been so full of blessing or has left so much joy behind." About this time we also read of evangelistic services by the two friends at Drury Lane. The reports of the work of these days are uniformly enthusiastic, but to quote them at length would not add much to the story we have to tell; so we have been content to reproduce only the short sentences given above.

When this six months' engagement had terminated, the two evangelists were again requested by the Presbytery to give them three months' further time for the same work. They consented, but when only one fortnight of the time had passed, Mr. Irvine had an attack of hæmorrhage, and was prevented from continuing his share of the work. The Presbytery arranged for him

to go to the south of France to recuperate, and there his health improved, and it is not long till we find him working again, this time in Ireland, along with his former colleague and fellow-student. In the meantime, Mr. Davey carried through the entire programme alone, which meant preaching every week-night, except Saturday, and twice on Sundays. The work was strenuous,—indeed too strenuous, as he himself felt in later years. His first enforced rest came within about two years of this time, and was but the beginning of a series of periodic breakdowns through overstrain. But Dr. Davey had the temperament which always worked to the limit of its ability and sometimes beyond—the temperament which was only happy when working at full pressure. The world indeed, to human eyes, seems almost to be divided into those who work too much and those who work too little; and Dr. Davey, to the day of his death, was in the former class. It was in work he found his joy; and if the load was sometimes too heavy for the flesh, it never was so for the spirit. He looked to God for the ability to do all that his hand found to do, and in these early days of over-strenuous work he came to rely very definitely upon the guidance and strength of the unseen Master whom he served. He never counted the cost,—he gave all his powers without stint to the work that had been given him to do. An Irish friend, in touch with his work in England, wrote of these strenuous months: "The same success and blessing which we were accustomed to associate with his work here [in Ulster] characterised this work in London." In view of what has been said earlier, no stronger testimony could be given to the spiritual success of these days. At the end of six weeks, however, the strain was beginning to tell, when an elder's

wife in one of the London churches, noticing how tired he looked, took him home and tended him like a mother. She is the same loving friend to this day—a London grandmother of his children. Indeed, he was blessed with wonderful kindness on the part of friends all his life through. In his earlier days of work in and around Belfast, when he had taken seriously ill with congestion of the lungs, another lady, "succourer of many," took him home and nursed him back to strength, continuing to be one of his best friends to the end. After his death she wrote of him: "Never, in a long life, have I met such a thoroughly good man, or one who lived so near to God; and I have known him for thirty-five years." Yet another of his closest friendships was with a member of his congregation in Ballymena, who had first recognised his worth during his mission there in 1882. She continued to be one of his warmest friends and encouragers through all the years of his life; to the quiet of her beautiful country home he retired at least once a year, for rest and refreshment, when the strain of work called for a pause, and though living a considerable distance from Belfast, she looked upon him as her pastor until he passed into the unseen.

A letter which he wrote to an Irish friend about this time or a little earlier, in answer to some inquiries on spiritual matters (one of the few letters of his which we have been able to recover), may here be quoted in part as an interesting and clear statement of his personal religion,—that religion which was the secret of his spiritual power and grace of character. "One or two things," he writes, "have been very helpful to me—call them axioms or first principles if you like. I will number them:—

"(1) I am a child of God by reason of my faith in Christ. . . . The relation of a child to a parent is a permanent one; it does not alter, no matter how the child's feelings or states of soul may alter. Just so is it in spiritual things. When I am weak and unhappy, beset by temptation and full of doubt, I am still my Father's child, and just as dear to Him (though not so happy) as when I am rejoicing in His love.

"(2) It is my privilege and duty to neither think, nor say, nor do anything unworthy of this holy relationship. This is a high standard, very high, but I am sure our Father contemplated nothing less in making us His children. . . . We think of our own weakness, our past failures, and our future difficulties, and so we lose the battle before it is well begun. Let us turn resolutely from these things, and fix our attention upon Him in whom is all fulness, and who says, 'My grace is sufficient for thee.'

"(3) In seeking to attain to this life of God's child, nothing so helps me as a recognition of the fact that I am not my own. Our happiness, as well as our growth in grace, will depend upon where we find our life's centre —whether in self or in Christ. As Christians we are His, and He will look after His own purchased possession; while we will think how many crowns we can put upon His head. . . . If, for example, I am thinking of doing a certain thing, I will not ask whether this is most pleasing to me, or whether it will bring a reward in the shape of human applause. No! I must ask if it will please Him whose I am and whom I serve. Will it add to His glory? Or just ask this simple question when placed in a difficulty: 'How would Christ act if He were placed in this set of circumstances?'

"(4) And let us ever remember that this same Saviour bears the burdens of His people and guides their destiny. He keeps the planets in their course, and yet He observes the falling of a sparrow. . . . Here is a heart large enough and tender enough to enter into everything that affects my life. . . . And then He is upon the throne. He rules over all; and there is not an event in my life nor any life that is not subject to that ruling. He can hush the storm in Galilee as well as weep with Martha and Mary; and here my soul finds rest."

Dr. Davey never meant that this letter should appear in public print. Had he thought of that possibility, it would certainly have been pruned and polished into something more literary in its phrases and form; but it is surely just as genuine and as self-revealing as anything he ever penned for the pulpit or the printer; and it shows us the vigorous faith in the fatherhood and omnipotence of God and in the centrality of Christ which underlay his public and private life, as it shows us also the lofty and uncompromising idealism of his moral principles.

CHAPTER IV

SETTLEMENT IN THE HOMELAND

Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel

To the end of his life Dr. Davey loved London. Its life and bustle, its variety of interest, and its great need, laid a spell on him, during his sojourn there, which was never broken; and he was in a fair way to be settled there for good at the period we have reached. We do not know that he thought of Ireland as having a first claim on his life till the definite call came to him from a home town in which he had already laboured with much success. We know of several openings presented to him in England about this time, chiefly in provincial spheres, and refused by him, probably because his heart was in London rather than the provinces, and in evangelistic rather than routine work. When his engagement with the London Presbytery was just at an end, Dr. Donald Fraser, for the third time, wrote to him, pressing him to come as his assistant to Marylebone Church, at a salary of £300. How his decision might have gone in different circumstances we cannot say—we know at least that the offer was seriously entertained; but while he was considering the letter, a communication arrived from the Right Hon. John Young of Galgorm Castle, informing him that the

Photo by A. R. Hogg, Belfast

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, BALLYMENA

congregation of First Ballymena Presbyterian Church had held an informal meeting on the previous Sunday, when the mind of the congregation had been taken on the subject of a successor to the Rev. George Hanson, who had gone to Rathgar in Dublin; and that, as a result, they invited him unanimously and most heartily to be their minister; but as they could not yet make out a call to him till he should become connected with the Irish Presbyterian Church, which might be done at the General Assembly in June, they bound themselves in honour to give it to him after that time. He was but a licentiate of the English Presbyterian Church at the moment, and this fact accounts both for his ineligibility for a call from the congregation, and for the irregularity of the congregational meeting in question, which caused some little stir at the time in the local Presbytery, as the Church's Code of Discipline recognised no such procedure (irregular rather than illegal though it was) as was then of necessity adopted. Objections of a merely legal character however availed and could avail nothing against the solid determination of the congregation concerned; and the strength and unanimity of the appeal from a district in which God had greatly blessed his labour, could not but move him strongly. It was the call of the home country, the call of men and women who had not heard him preach for five years, and yet were satisfied to give him this unconditional invitation to be their leader in spiritual things—a call which had come about without any move or even knowledge on his part. He found decision difficult, but in the end he accepted the Ballymena invitation, and he never regretted the step.

He was ordained in First Ballymena on 16th August,

1887, to the pastoral charge of a congregation which dated its formation about the year 1627. In the speech which he made at the reception following the ordination service, the new minister assured his audience that he had not made his decision in a hurry, and that he believed God Himself had directed his steps thither. In coming among them, he said he had three reasons for his hope that the blessing of God would be upon his work. In the first place, he had confidence in the people of Ballymena who had called him; in the second place, he had faith in the God who had sent him among them; and in the third place, to quote his own words, "I have confidence in the Gospel you have committed to my charge this day. Customs and manners and currents of thought change, the world itself grows old, but the Gospel, like its Author, is unchangeable and immortal. It lives on through ages. It is still the power of God unto salvation, God's great instrument for regenerating fallen man. It is just as powerful to-day as it was eighteen centuries ago, when the burning words of the Apostle Peter startled the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and extorted the cry: 'Men and brethren, what shall we do!' And I know no other gospel. The present century has added much to the sum total of our knowledge. It has roused the energies of the human mind; it has poured floods of light into many a dark corner of the universe; but it has given us nothing that can fairly be called a gospel, except it be the gospel of doubt. That old Gospel then, so full of grace, so full of the might and majesty of God, I shall try to preach as God may enable me, not in the mere words of human wisdom, but in the power of the Spirit; not in a few chosen texts, but in the length and breadth of it as I find it in the Scriptures of the Old and

New Testaments and in the standards of our Church. In my humble judgment, the great want of our own land to-day—and, indeed, the world's great want,—is the Gospel of Christ in its integrity, proclaimed and pressed home upon the heart and conscience by men who are themselves in full sympathy with God and man—men who have felt upon their hearts the fiery touch of the Divine Spirit. I am humbled to the dust to think that God should have called me to take any part, however humble, in the ministry of such a Gospel. But the labourers are few and the fields are white unto harvest, and when the Master called, my heart could not but respond, 'Here am I; send me.' . . . I know that Providence has guided me, and there my heart finds peace. He never sends His servants to do what they cannot do, nor does He send them alone. The work is His, not theirs, and He is the Worker too. His two promises—'My grace is sufficient for thee' and 'Lo, I am with you'—are all I ask for the present. The future I leave with Him without making any terms. He knows its difficulties and He knows its possibilities, and the less I look at either, and the more I look to Him, the happier and the more useful I shall be."

Not a few of Mr. Davey's precursors in this his new charge have been well-known figures in the history of our Church; Dr. Dill of Magee College, Dr. Park of Rosemary Street, Dr. Marcus Dill of Alloway, and Dr. George Hanson of Montreal, being his immediate predecessors. The congregation to which he was now to minister was a widely-scattered one, extending about five miles in every direction, and composed of some seven hundred families in definite connection and many others who claimed to be adherents. The church was large and

comfortable, easy to speak and hear in, with considerable seating accommodation in galleries as well as ground floor, and in all holding easily twelve hundred people. The old church tower was condemned as unsafe during his ministry there, and by its loss the church lost some of its beauty as a building. The manse of the church, where the first happy years of his married life were spent, and his two eldest sons born, is but a short distance from the church, and had the distinction of being the only slated house in the vicinity, when Ballymena, "the City of the Seven Towers," was but a village. For four and a half years Mr. Davey was destined to be the pastor of this important church, and to prove, both in public and private, the warm-hearted loyalty of its members, both to himself and to his message. Some of the most enduring friendships of his life were formed in Ballymena, and in all his pastoral work there he never found any occasion for regrets. When at last he left his Ballymena flock for a wider sphere of influence, he carried with him their unaltered affection and cordial good wishes, and was ever a welcome visitor to the pulpit of his old church or the homes of its members.

The communion services, which were held twice a year, in April and October, lingered long in his memory; and he used to say that no services ever gave him personally such peculiar pleasure. The old-fashioned tables in the aisles, with their white cloths and the wooden benches for communicants, were still in use until after he left Ballymena; and the services, which had to allow of five "tables" in succession, used to last from eleven till three o'clock.

After he had been settled in Ballymena for six months or more, he found it necessary to get an assistant,

as, in addition to the ordinary church services, frequent meetings were held in the outlying districts; and the wide area over which the congregation was scattered necessitated also the spending of a great deal of time in visitation. In the small townlands of the district, with perhaps fifty or sixty families belonging to his church all dwelling close together, he would visit during the day, and then have a meeting in one of the houses at night. In this way he managed to keep in touch with the old and infirm, who could not make the longer journey to church. In the course of his visitation he found reason for astonishment in the number of unbaptised children in the countryside, and baptismal services became quite a feature of his visits in the more remote parts of the country for some time. Some of the most faithful attenders at Church and Sabbath-school came from the very boundaries of his parish; and the Sabbath-school itself was a very living department of the church work, having an average attendance of five hundred and fifty children.

Mr. Davey's congregational visiting often led him into places of infection. He was for a while in close contact with some very bad cases of typhus fever. Into one of the houses in question, which was inhabited by three elderly sisters, not one of the neighbours would enter, even though two of the sisters were very ill, and the other, the only one who was left to do anything for them, was but half-witted. One day he visited the house to find one of the three lying dead in the bed alongside the other who was ill, and no helper at hand; and even on the day of the funeral no one would go into the house but himself. He never rushed into danger, and he took all reasonable precautions in such cases; but if sent for, he

always held it to be his duty to go, and trust God for the rest. His whole life long he never permitted anything to keep him back from what he believed to be his path of duty. On one occasion about this time, when lying in bed with pleurisy, and blistered back and front, he got up against specific medical warnings and travelled to Ballyclare for a service he had promised, because he felt he must go, owing to his failure to procure a substitute. Though the snow was on the ground, and though he had to drive part of the way night and morning in an open vehicle, he arrived home none the worse of his outing; for his faith was ever stronger than his fears.

On January 22nd, 1889, he was married very quietly by special licence, in Ballymena, to Margaret, second daughter of James Beatty, clerk of session in his congregation. This was the beginning of a singularly happy married life, a perfect union of heart and purpose which only became closer and fuller with the passing of the years, and which to not a few came to stand for the ideal of married life. Their honeymoon was spent in London, the city he knew and loved so well, and he and his wife visited together some of the places in which he had worked only a few years before. They went to see many of the old friends about the metropolis, then went on to Liverpool, where they spent the rest of their time before returning to Ballymena. The congregation marked the occasion by making him the recipient of an address and a valuable presentation.

For four and a half years he lived and worked in Ballymena; the work itself prospered greatly in his hands, and he was very happy in it, though the ideal he ever set before him was so high that failure to attain it at times depressed him unduly. This was in particular

true of his preaching. Always of an exceptionally nervous temperament, preaching took more out of him than out of most men. He spent a great deal of time in preparation, sometimes nearly half his week; in Ballymena he even used to go down to the church on Saturdays, and preach his sermons in advance to the empty seats: surely an extraordinary thing for a man who was no novice, but had been preaching continually to large audiences in many places for ten years, and with marked success. The fact is, his ideal was so abnormally high that he could never rest contentedly upon what was past, either of success or experience. When he had done his best, he knew it to be very poor, because his standards of value were not of this world, but had in them the measures, or rather the measurelessness, of the infinite. When the sermon was over, he would sometimes feel that he had never preached so badly; that he had done poor justice, indeed, to his great theme; and when his wife would seek to comfort him, he often quoted a remark of Ian Maclaren which he had heard him make in Oxford some years earlier: "Our wives! God bless them! When we have done our very worst, they will try to comfort us, and will say, 'It was a noble effort'!" Yet these times of depression about his preaching were not infrequently followed by his learning, within a few days, how the words of which he thought so meanly had led one and another into the way of life and peace, or had helped and encouraged someone who needed illumination or uplift. His work in the Ballymena pastorate was very fruitful in the winning and upbuilding of human life for God and His employ; but, as usual, general impressions have been easier to discover than personal narratives, for our North of Ireland reserve seldom opens to outsiders

the doors into the inmost places of the soul. No doubt Dr. Davey himself knew many a striking story of hearts changed under his ministry, but such confidences never reached other ears from his side. We only know that the work was done, that hearts and lives were transformed beneath his proclamation of the Gospel of Christ, and that in abundant measure. His hearers, especially at night, were drawn from many quarters other than his own congregation. He had told us of both Roman Catholics and Plymouth Brethren who were constant attenders and warm friends, some even becoming members of his congregation: so do extremes meet when the voice of the prophet is heard in the land. Men knew intuitively that, for him, not his Church but his God, not man's theology but the Evangel of the Almighty, were the primary concern.

Since he has passed within the veil, there have come to us many testimonies to the influence and power of his work in these years. One comes from the mother of a family, then a young girl in his Bible-class in Ballymena, who tells us how he led to Christ both herself and others whom she knew. A young man who had a lingering illness, and whom he had been the means of leading into the light of God, sent him with his last breath the message, "Tell Mr. Davey I'm safely landed." After the morning service one Sunday, a stranger, who had been sitting in the front of the gallery, came to him to ask indignantly who had been telling the preacher all about him, and why he had dared to preach at him as he did. Mr. Davey knew neither him nor his circumstances, and told him so; the illustration which he had made use of had been purely hypothetical; but surely it was by the providence of God that it had been framed and

directed, rather than by the power of man. An earnest talk followed, which was attended by the blessing of God in heart and life. It was so with all Mr. Davey's public ministry; the finger of God was ever moving among the hearers, convincing, converting, and strengthening; and the knowledge of this fact, brought to his notice continually as it was, was the chief encouragement he received in his work; but not the only one, for he had the hearts of his people.

While in Ballymena, he was approached by two important Belfast congregations with a view to his translation to the city, but he could not see his way to leave the work upon which he was engaged. Church and Sabbath-school were growing; his ministry was prospering; and the demands of the work held him there. In one case a leading Belfast business-man actually offered to augment the stipend promised by a personal contribution of £200 a year—a testimony at least to his power and reputation as preacher and pastor; but he could not see God leading him to Belfast at the moment.

The want of a lecture-hall was at this time becoming acutely felt by the congregation. The large Sabbath-school was divided over the area and galleries of the church, the session-room, and a small schoolroom. This unsatisfactory position had led to an amusing incident worthy of record. A harmonium was used in the Sabbath-school praise service, being carried into the gallery for that purpose, and taken out again, according to the Presbyterian proprieties of the day, before the "worship of God" should begin! In the controversies of the General Assembly over the question of instrumental music, First Ballymena was cited as using a

harmonium in the church. The representative of the congregation who replied admitted the fact, but explained that its use, and even the contagion of its presence, were strictly confined to the hours of the Sabbath-school, using these delicious words: "It is carefully carried out before the service begins, *and the church well aired*"!

A lecture-hall was now felt to be a necessity for the satisfactory continuance of the church's work, and into the scheme of raising the money required Mr. Davey put his whole energy. He succeeded in collecting £750 towards that object; but he did not stay in Ballymena long enough to see the building completed, for, in the autumn of 1891, Dr. Hugh Hanna of St. Enoch's Church, Belfast, wrote to tell him that he was about to retire owing to failing health, and that both he himself and the congregation of which he had charge had, quite independently, been led to look to First Ballymena for its second pastor; "and," he wrote, "this surely is a divine indication. I have myself the strongest confidence in the future of St. Enoch's if you can see your way to come to us." Dr. Hanna had been in poor health for some time, and felt it necessary that St. Enoch's should get an assistant and successor to him in the work of the ministry, but he was above all anxious, as the founder of the church, and therefore profoundly interested in its continued success, that the man chosen should be a man after his own heart. His ideals of the true pastor's qualifications were very high; he could not easily, as the spiritual father of the congregation, be content with an indifferent successor. Born to generalship, he could not but try to mould the desires of his people in the direction he desired, though he never thrust upon them the name

which in his thoughts was associated with the fulfilment of his desire. In a sermon preached about this time, he sketched for the members of St. Enoch's the kind of man they must seek for if they were to carry on the work of God successfully; he spoke in general terms, but none the less with his mental eye upon Mr. Davey; and this knowledge on our part, gathered from one of his private letters, lends interest to his words as a picture of his actual successor as Dr. Hanna visualized him. The sermon in question was printed after Dr. Hanna's death, with the title "A Model Minister"; in it the preacher asks for a helper in the work of God for his own sake, and for the sake of his hearers and their children. "I cannot have him," he says, "if he be the right man, an hour too soon. He should be a man of experience. You won't expect me to navigate this stately three-decker [St. Enoch's had two very large galleries running the whole way round the building] helped by a first officer having no practical acquaintance with seamanship. That would be no help to me, for then I should have to navigate the ship and navigate my first officer as well." Experience in church work is the first feature of the ideal minister painted, the second is established character and influence; eloquence the third—not the eloquence which revels in cloudland, or makes pyrotechnic displays in the pulpit "to excite the astonishment and deepen the unprofitable sensations of the hearers," but the eloquence of a man who, in every word he utters, will feel his responsibility to God; the true eloquence, which is simple, clear, chaste, and impressive speech in the conveyance of the truth that belongs to the pulpit. The fourth necessity is that he shall be able to help those troubled by the doubts of their own minds or the ques-

tionings of the age; a man with a positive faith of his own. In the fifth place, one who is noted for the faithful preaching of the pure and simple Gospel of Christ, with a mind open to the reception of every truth that research and discovery may reveal; but a man established in the evangelical faith, "a man who will believe with his whole soul all that he preaches, and will believe nothing in secret that he dare not preach." Finally, he should be an assiduous pastor, humble and unassuming, of magnetic sympathy and hallowed influence in the homes of the people. Such, in Dr. Hanna's own words for the most part, though given only in outline here, is the picture of the man he desired to see take up the reins in St. Enoch's as he laid them down; and such a man, in practically every respect, was Mr. Davey, not only as Dr. Hanna believed in him, but as the congregation of St. Enoch's in after years knew him for themselves. Mr. Davey's settlement in St. Enoch's was the great sunset joy which came to the veteran soldier of the Evangel of Christ, ere he was called beyond the things of this earthly life: but this is to anticipate in our narrative.

St. Enoch's Church was a great building, built to house a crowd, situated in a developing quarter of the industrial capital of Ireland, well suited by its position at Carlisle Circus to attract and catch many a passer-by on Sundays, with a considerable and increasing membership, large schools, and many and varied Christian activities; in short, a strategic point for the church, and a great opening for a young and enthusiastic man. Its potentialities were in many ways greater than those of any other church in the whole country. This was the congregation of which Mr. Davey was now called to think, without in any way having sought the opportunity;

and the vision of the masses of Belfast was one which no man would or could lightly put aside when it lay within the scope of his heart's worthiest desires. The call seemed to offer a position which combined the work of both pastor and evangelist in an exceptional way, and must have appealed strongly to one whose experience and temperament had fitted him to be both. The great kindness of the big-hearted Dr. Hanna, his evident desire to have him as colleague, especially since he was known to be no friend of an empty or shallow evangelism, and the wonderful unanimity evinced by the people, all had their influence upon the minister of First Ballymena; but he decided to consult the principal members in the congregation there, and some of his closest friends in the district, before committing himself to any course of action. To his surprise, some of those from whom he had anticipated a plea against leaving Ballymena, and against whose opinion he would hardly have acted, looked at the matter from a larger point of view than local interests, and told him they could not advise him to refuse this great field of labour which was calling him. Against every longing of their own hearts, some of his friends refused to speak the word which might hold him in a less important sphere, and he felt that God was indeed making his way plain before him.

When his willingness to receive the invitation of St. Enoch's became known, matters soon matured, and a call, signed by 1,001 persons, was drawn up by the congregation. The Clerk of the Belfast Presbytery, writing to him in connection with it, says: "I think it is only right that you should know that the call is unique in more ways than one. I believe there is a larger number of names attached to it than to any call ever presented

to any minister of our Church. The unanimity which has characterised the whole proceedings in connection with it from the beginning, has been such that we can only say of it, 'This is the finger of God.'" Another close ministerial friend of long standing, writing at the same time, says: "The people are not only unanimous but enthusiastic. The opening is one of the finest in the world. Many a man has waited a lifetime for one half as good and has not got it. You are God's favoured child. I sympathise with the people in Ballymena; but God is, I think, clearly calling you in the great unanimity of pastor and people in St. Enoch's. God has a right to place you in the spot where you may serve Him to the greatest advantage." And so the decision was made to leave the congregation and the town in which he had made so many friends, and of which he had so many happy memories, where his wife had been born and married, and their two eldest children born and baptised. He was being called to the great work of his life. Every outstanding life of service to God has had its climax, its flood-tide, its harvest, sometimes longer and sometimes shorter, but usually covering a few years of abnormal activity and influence. It was upon that phase of his life-work that the young minister of Jesus Christ was now bidden to enter, and in faith and obedience he went forward, not daring to be disobedient to the heavenly vision, but eager to do with all his might whatever his hand should find to do in the great city which had so suddenly opened its doors to him.

SERMON ECHOES

II

I NEVER yet knew a soul who felt the darkness, that was not near God's light. If you are straining your eyes for it, the dawn is not far off.

Try some day to strike out of your prayers every sentence that has not the heart's desire behind it, and see how much of your prayer is left.

The tides of the Spirit are high, but the dykes of unbelief and prayerlessness are often higher still.

Learn to live well, for you will never do it by *accident.*

Some lives are like a three-volume work, two volumes of which should never have been written.

O God, give us now and then a man with a love that knows not prudence; who will do the work that is to be done regardless of consequences; who will do right with utter self-forgetfulness.

When a man dies, men ask, "What has he left behind?" Angels ask, "What has he sent before?"

It is sad that so many are content to gather their reading from the rag-bag of literature.

Many of us are willing to let God arrange the large affairs of our life if He leaves the details to ourselves.

You may know much about the Bible and yet not know enough of its spirit to guide a little child into the kingdom of heaven.

CHAPTER V

THE EARLIER YEARS IN ST. ENOCH'S

We live in deeds, not years

On the day that the call from St. Enoch's was presented in the Ballymena Presbytery, Dr. Hanna expressed the wish that the date of the installation should be fixed as early as possible in January of the year 1892. Mr. Davey was anxious to have a short holiday first, as he felt in need of one, but Dr. Hanna was very pressing, and seemed to speak under an inexplicable sense of urgency; so the date of the installation was fixed as January 7th. Some premonition of the future must have been behind the urgent desire of the old doctor for a speedy settlement, and events justified the haste with which matters were pressed forward. The congregational reception to welcome the new pastor was held on the 8th, a most unpropitious evening, marked by one of the severest snowstorms Belfast has ever experienced, when neither tram nor cab was able to render assistance to those who ventured out of doors; yet, despite the weather, the attendance was large and enthusiastic. On the following Sunday Dr. Hanna introduced his successor to the congregation at the morning service, and to the Sunday-school in the afternoon. In making this latter introduction, Dr. Hanna is remembered to have said: "Here [pointing to himself]

Photo by A. R. Hogg, Belfast

ST. ENOCH'S CHURCH, BELFAST

is the Apostle Peter, but this is the Apostle John, the beloved disciple." The two ministers, in the short space which Providence had yet left for them to work side by side, made the rounds of the congregation together, while Dr. Hanna made Mr. Davey known to the people he was to serve in spiritual things. Everywhere they went the older man seemed to carry with him a pride which he could not hide in his new colleague, and one member of the church writes that "his face literally beamed as he spoke of him to the people," while another friend has remarked "he looked as unaffectedly pleased as a child with a new toy." It was a short but very happy partnership of two ministering spirits united in a common aim and a common zeal.

St. Enoch's Church, at Carlisle Circus, is the largest Presbyterian Church in Ireland; it can seat at a pinch about 2,500 persons, being built after the manner of Spurgeon's Tabernacle, with two large galleries, each seating from 600 to 700. The Sabbath-school had 2,300 scholars on the roll and 120 teachers, and met in the church and in the schools behind it. There was also a large number of day schools, ten in all, in five different localities, and with 80 teachers, all under the management of the pastor of St. Enoch's. Such was the large congregational and institutional work of which Mr. Davey now took charge, and it was to grow yet greater under his care. For three weeks Dr. Hanna and he were permitted to unite in their service of God in this great sphere of ministerial labour, until by the hand of death, all unlooked for, the one was taken and the other left. During those days the senior minister was constantly effacing himself and pushing forward his younger colleague, and in every way possible showing an extraordinary kindness

and consideration for his successor in the active work of the ministry. On the last Sunday of the month the Lord's Supper was celebrated at the morning service; and in the evening Mr. Davey preached from the text "The Master is come and calleth for thee," while Dr. Hanna sat below the pulpit with a serene and rapt expression on his strong face. Next day they visited together no less than thirty-four families, as Dr. Hanna was anxious to get him quickly into touch with as many of the congregation as possible. The day following (Tuesday) he introduced him to the Presbytery of Belfast in a singularly happy speech, but the end was nearer than anyone dreamt. Wednesday's paper, which reproduced his speech at the Presbytery, contained also the sad news of his sudden death. On the Tuesday evening he was to have taken the chair at a meeting in St. Enoch's, when Mr. Davey was to give an address to young men; but, on arriving at the church, he was taken suddenly ill, and very reluctantly allowed himself to be taken home. He rallied for a time, but shortly after midnight his symptoms became worse, and he passed away quite suddenly. The news was a great blow to his younger colleague, whom he had treated almost as a son, and who had looked forward to having his companionship and help for years to come. The burden of the great congregation with its many activities suddenly seemed to grow very heavy and terrifying, and he often spoke of it as one of the darkest hours of his life when, in the grey dawn of the morning, he heard the news of the sudden death of Dr. Hanna. It was the passing of a great man, and the whole community made it evident on the day of the funeral that they knew it; but he was not only great, he was also greatly beloved, and the

shock brought no small measure of grief to the congregation for whom he had spent himself and his powers so freely.

Mr. Davey then took up the task single-handed; and by reason of his faith in God and the assistance of a magnificent band of helpers, the work went on apace. The congregation, already large, became larger, exactly doubling itself within the next eight years, so that before he left St. Enoch's the membership of the church had risen to 1,350 families, besides some hundreds of others who claimed a looser connection. This one fact in itself implies an enormous activity on the part of the pastor. The church on Sundays was crowded, but particularly in the evenings, when he faced over two thousand of an audience, and felt how good it was to have a Gospel to preach. The vision of that great sea of faces, the great volume of their praise, the hushing of the hum of many voices as he stood up to speak to them the things of God, were a great inspiration to the preacher, and seemed to call forth every power that dwelt in him for good and for the influencing of human life. Even those who came to listen felt it so; many of them used to say that they felt a thrill as they entered the door; they seemed to pass into an atmosphere of spiritual warmth and expectancy, which the whole service of praise and prayer only augmented and deepened, till in the sermon the presence of God Himself seemed to encompass about the hearts, willing or unwilling, of those that heard once more the proclamation of the Gospel of God's grace.

In a short appreciation of his life which appeared in the "Missionary Herald" of May 1919, just after Dr. Davey's death, the writer, an old St. Enoch's worker, and now a minister of a church in the near vicinity of

Belfast, says: "For eight years he was the leader and the inspiration of multitudinous and multifarious Christian activities in that immense congregation; and when he left there was only one heart in all its members, and that heart was filled with mingled gratitude and regret. Those of us who had the privilege of belonging to St. Enoch's Church saw demonstrated before our eyes that the Gospel had not lost its ancient power. That great building was packed from floor to ceiling with an audience that at evening worship numbered over 2,000 people. The breathless attention they gave to the words spoken was explained by the fact that a man of holy life, humble heart, and gracious speech, was holding up the torch of testimony to the face of the crucified Redeemer. It was good indeed to be there, for the power of God was often present to bless. From private intercourse we came to the conclusion that our minister's mind was a rich cabinet containing many rare gems, and in our youthful zeal we would fain have seen him bringing forth more of his rich jewels to dazzle the strangers who repaired to the church; but from the first he had determined to hide himself behind the Cross of Christ, and he was wiser than we. . . . Mr. Davey would sometimes apply his sermon with heart-throbs in his voice, with such effect that his hearers would recognise the voice of the Eternal. The Rev. Charles Davey is gone, but his influence still lives in a band of men who sat under him and worked under him in St. Enoch's, and who now, Sabbath after Sabbath, walk up the steps of their own pulpits to proclaim the Word of Life. To find so many acting as Elisha to his Elijah is the highest testimony to the influence of his great ministry in St. Enoch's."

Dr. Davey himself knew of twenty-five young men who had entered the ministry from the ranks of his congregation at St. Enoch's, and the fact was a great and permanent source of joy to him. The one unrealised dream of his life was to help in founding a fund to give help to young men who, like himself in the early days, had not the means to carry them through the lengthy period of college training for the ministry; perhaps that dream of his may yet be realised by proxy, but he himself never had the happiness of seeing it translated into fact. Nevertheless, he was able in a small way to help many a young man on the road to that high calling. One case, of which he only learned the issue a few years before his death, was that of a minister in a sister church of the New World whom he had helped in early days, but had lost sight of for many years, and who at last wrote to him in 1917, on the occasion of the death of his son in France, "I can never forget your kindness to me as a barefoot lad." The number of those in the ministry of our own or other churches, who were known to him as men first interested in the Kingdom of Christ by definite conversion under his pulpit ministry and pastorate in St. Enoch's, was to the last continually growing with the years as he heard from one and another that such had been the commencement of their Christian service.

A few years ago, at a small sale of work, an old member of St. Enoch's, then a chaplain on leave from France, said to Mrs. Davey: "I have often felt lately that I should like to see Mr. Davey and tell him how, in the old days in St. Enoch's, he led me to Christ; but I leave for the front again in the beginning of the week, and so I shall not have the opportunity now. When I

get back, I'll come and see him. He knows that my brothers were converted under his ministry, but I don't think he ever heard about me, and I should like him to know." It was another "last message," for he never came back.

Another minister wrote, after Dr. Davey's death in 1919, to Mrs. Davey, "I am one of those in this and many other lands in whose heart he lives, whom he led to the Cross"; and in a later letter adds, "He was my spiritual father. I may say I was among the first-fruits of his ministry in what were to me, and to many more, the happy blessed days of St. Enoch's. I remember, as yesterday, the first evening he preached after Dr. Hanna's death. His text was, 'I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.' The sermon made a most wonderful impression on me, and, under the guidance of God's Spirit, was the means of leading me to a definite decision for Christ. Since then I have never ceased to hold him in reverence, and have ever looked upon him as the model Christian, the ideal pastor, the perfect gentleman. It was he who received me into communion, and directed my thoughts toward the Christian ministry. He saw the first beginnings toward that end, and it was to me a great joy to have him at my ordination. He offered up the ordination prayer, and to this day I hear men speak of that prayer. I can truthfully say that, outside my home, I owe more to him than to any other man." He had the power of inspiring lives won for Christ to a greater than ordinary devotion by the wideness of his faith, which saw the true potentialities of life always against the background of God and His omnipotence.

Another minister of our Church tells how he met him

at a funeral shortly after he, a young boy of sixteen, had given his heart to God; and he has never forgotten how Mr. Davey came to him on that occasion, laid his hand upon his shoulder, and said: "I am so glad to hear you have taken this step. You have no idea what God may not yet do with your life." The words opened to him a vista of service to which his eyes had been blind, but which has never left him; they awakened in him the desire to be in that place where God could most use him; and though at first he was financially unable to avoid entering upon a business career, in the end the vision given him that day triumphed over all obstacles, and he is to-day a worker in the ministry of the Church of God.

Dr. Davey was specially interested in the young; wherever he went, he desired that his church should be known as a young people's church; and his desire in these days was amply fulfilled. In St. Enoch's the young gathered round him in great numbers, especially in connection with his Bible-class and the Christian Endeavour Society, which latter was, in spiritual helpfulness, well to the fore among the manifold activities of St. Enoch's.

Another ministerial friend, who was a member of St. Enoch's in these days, tells us how he brought a friend with him one night into the Christian Endeavour Society meeting. "It was a good meeting," he says, "and when we came out, my friend made reference to the responses, and said with a smile, 'Little Charles Daveys; all little Charles Daveys': surely a happy tribute to the reality of his unconscious influence."

His power to attract and hold the young had been proved again and again. A prominent minister of our Church has written of a holiday at his old country home

in the early eighties, when he heard of a Mr. Davey who, along with another, had been conducting services in a marquee close by, and had won the hearts of the young men and women of the whole surrounding country. This power was never more markedly felt than in his ministry at St. Enoch's, and the number and enthusiasm of the young men and women who became his helpers in the work of that great church was a constant source of help and inspiration to him during those years when he was often weary with overwork. The work was inordinately, indeed impossibly, heavy, and at the pace set could not have continued for many years; but if it was heavy, it was also remarkably fruitful and prosperous. The vast congregations of Sunday nights suffered no diminution; if intending hearers were not there by 6-30 (for a 7 o'clock service) they could not get into their own seats; if they were not there by 6-45, they could not get in at all. It may be of interest to record that one seat in the gallery, holding about twelve persons, was regularly filled, night after night, by Roman Catholics; and few indeed were the denominations which were not at some time represented in the great Sunday evening gatherings of these years. An atmosphere of spiritual expectancy held both preacher and hearers in its grip, and rarely a week passed that he did not hear of someone having been blessed as he listened. The criticism once passed on a popular preacher—"The sermon seemed all right, but somehow I felt he didn't expect anything to happen"—was certainly not true of the pastor of St. Enoch's. Results he yearned for, prayed for, and looked for; and his faith and prayers were honoured by the Master whom he served in a multitude of conversions and of lives strengthened and deepened by the Spirit of God. There

is a remarkable uniformity of testimony as to the effect of his preaching in these days, even upon those whose lives were already in conscious touch with the Divine. From various quarters the testimony has reached us in almost identically the same words: "After the service I had no desire to meet anyone; I felt I must get home quickly and think things out alone in God's presence." One friend who gave this as his experience added: "I called with three families in one evening, when I was told of exactly the same feeling." Surely we have here a striking testimony to the prophetic calling and spiritual endowment of the preacher in question; it was not the speaker, but his message, that was ever in the foreground. It was the voice of God which men in St. Enoch's heard, speaking through human lips that had been touched by the live coal from off the altar.

Mr. Davey was always a close and careful expositor of the Scripture he used; but in his evening evangelistic addresses, nevertheless, his choice and use of texts were often very free. For these great evening assemblages in particular he chose many a striking and unforgettable verse or phrase of Scripture; and not a few of them have come to us in the records of those who were blessed by these sermons. Some of the most remembered were —"Is the young man safe?" "Not far from the Kingdom of God," "How is it that ye have no faith?" "Seeing Him who is invisible," "While I was musing the fire kindled," "What do ye more than others?" "Come now and let us reason together," "How old art thou?" "Am I my brother's keeper?" "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it," "What is thy name?"

"Only a few years ago," writes a friend, "an elder in a well-known city church told me that he had made

the great decision after hearing Mr. Davey preach in St. Enoch's from the text 'Is the young man [Absalom] safe?'" The sermon in question was memorable in the experience of a vast number who heard it, and we have, in our gathering up of material for this volume, found several traces of its use by God in the definite conversion of human hearts. One Belfast business man said to Mrs. Davey a few months ago, "Did you ever know that it was Dr. Davey who was the means of my conversion? I went up to him one day in St. Enoch's and told him that it was the sermon he had preached on—'Is the young man safe?'—which had led me to Christ, and his reply was, 'You are the eighty-fourth person who has told me the same in connection with that sermon.'" This is one of the few cases in which we have any statistical statement whatever of the success of his work; and it is surely a very striking one, though it refers to only one sermon, and does not even claim any completeness as a record of the lives changed by that sermon. Dr. Davey did not believe in the common counting of heads, and this one instance, in which, for some reason, he was led to count, is but an example of the kind of thing which was happening in measure all through those days; and we can only be glad that it has been left to us as a concrete illustration of the power of his witness to the things of God.

It may be of interest to some if I reproduce the direct and practical closing words of this memorable sermon, as typical of many such, with the caution that the sermon as written is not identical in power or even in substance with the sermon as delivered. "When is the young man safe? He must have a new heart; he must be the possessor of a new life; for, 'except a man

be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.' Young man, are you safe? If you are in an argumentative mood, you will, perhaps, tell me that others do not insist so strenuously on this change of heart. I cannot help that; I should be very sorry if you made this a question between myself and others. Nay, take these words which I have just quoted from the lips of the Son of God, whom you must admit is an authority on matters of religion; and don't trouble yourself with what preachers may say, but occupy yourself with this question: 'What did Christ mean by this?' You will agree with me, I think, that He meant something. Try to find out what that something is. If you allow the teaching of any man to keep you back from the investigation and the settlement of the deepest and most important question connected with your life, you will not thank him when you meet him at the judgment-seat of Christ. I am not in the least afraid to stand firm on this ground, that no young man is safe for both worlds until he has been born of the Spirit of God. Nor is a man quite prepared even for the storms of this one without such endowment from above. You feel well and strong enough to-night; you feel as if you could run, and wrestle, and battle your way even if circumstances were adverse; but you are not out of the world yet. After a while you will know sickness, and it will be borne in upon you in a way that you cannot appreciate to-night, that this tabernacle in which you dwell could easily be taken down; and standing for the first time in full view of the river of death, with its spray upon your face, you will want something better than even your own morality to uphold you. It will not nerve you for the dark journey to say 'I was as good as others.' You

will want the Son of God to stand by you and to say 'Fear not, for I am with thee.' And if you would have Him then, take Him now; in these solemn closing moments of this service let your soul speak with Him. Do not wake up at the last to say that no one told you of the reality of these things; someone tells you of it now. Be a man! Would it not be more worthy of you to-night, when your mind is cool and your step is firm and strong, to come to an understanding with your Creator about these things, than to wait till you are sick, or in the iron grip of death, and then to come and beg Him to shelter your poor soul from the pitiless storm. You have often meant to do this; bring yourself up to it to-night, and do it! And do not be content with mere personal salvation, with the safety of your own soul; but seek the salvation of others. Seek to save your generation and to throw your mite of effort into the world's treasury, and so help to bring in the better day that Christ came to tell us of, the great age that is before the Church of God."

He used to plead with the young people in his sermons to keep in touch with the old folk at home, many of whom compassed them about continually in thought and prayer; and now and again he would hear how his words had been effective in constraining one and another to break the silence of years by writing to their parents, and how joy had been brought to the old home after months or years of patient sorrow. He knew what it meant to the old folk not to be forgotten; for he himself was one of the best of sons. During all the years he had been from home, not a week passed without a letter from him; and if he was in this country, never a month without a visit; and in later years, when his

parents were too old and infirm for work, he supported them till they were taken from this life to the life beyond. "A good son makes a good husband," as he made manifest to the knowledge of all who knew him in his home life; for no better husband or father ever blessed an earthly family. The members of his congregation found him the same as did his parents and his family—considerate, helpful, sympathetic, and loving; a man to whom any confidence might safely be given, and with whom any difficulty might be talked over frankly. "He wasn't like a minister when he came to see us," said an old-time member of his flock, "but just a dear friend to whom we could tell everything." And so it came about that he was called in to help in all kinds of private matters when the skeins of family life were tangled. Sometimes he was saddened by failure to straighten matters out, but he had often the joy of being the means of bringing about a better understanding and of cementing more firmly the divinely-ordered ties of home life.

About this time D. L. Moody returned to Belfast to hold a mission in the great Ulster Convention building on "The Plains," which was built to hold ten thousand people. It was a time of exceptional opportunity, owing to the atmosphere of enthusiasm for Christian service to which it gave birth; and Mr. Davey used it for awakening and heightening the zeal of Christian workers for the winning of the souls of men. One of his Sabbath-school teachers, who had a large class of men, was so greatly impressed by a sermon upon the words "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets"—in which the preacher urged definite personal work upon all the Christian workers of his congregation, and called upon those who had long put out their nets to draw them in

and find if their work had indeed been blessed of God to the salvation of human lives—that he said to himself, "I have never done that; I have never even asked one of them if he has decided for Christ; I'll do it at once." Thereupon he invited a number of them to come with him to one of Mr. Moody's meetings. They came, and so gave him a natural opening for a personal talk which resulted in no less than thirty of them taking their stand that week on the side of Christ. If there is a time to keep silence, there is also a time to speak; and not a few Christian workers forget, or will not remember, that it is so. Personal dealing is harder work than teaching a class, and Mr. Davey knew it, but it must have its place; and, therefore, he never ceased to urge upon teachers their responsibility for definite personal contact with the members of their classes upon the great question of individual religion.

One great secret of his power was his extraordinary tact and sympathy. The price of true tactfulness—as distinct from cowardice, which the word is often used to explain away—is very high, and all his life he paid it to the full, but ungrudgingly. It is never easy to court the censure of extremists; it is never easy to think yourself into another's position; but Mr. Davey did these things when necessary as few could or would. One friend, who had worked under him for some years, tells of a letter of very sound advice which Mr. Davey sent him when he was far from home; it began with the words, "I have been thinking a good deal about you of late, and have thought myself into your position and circumstances." He was not the man to make the claim if it were not true. Another friend, writing of the success of his St. Enoch's ministry, says: "His gentle manner,

his tactfulness, his sense of 'the fitness of things,' enabled him to speak plain, hard truths without anyone taking offence. It was recognised that the salvation of men and women was his only object." And the same writer adds, with reference to his exceptional gift of sympathy, "A cordial welcome always awaited him in the homes of the people; and when sore affliction or the shadow of death had entered, oh! how comforting were those petitions of his, and what a world of sympathy and understanding there was in that quiet, steady look and that wonderful hand-clasp." Another friend of these days, Mr. Duncan Kirkwood, who held the position of lay-helper in St. Enoch's till 1898, has written at length his impressions of those remarkable years. In his account he mentions how, at times, the preacher seemed cast down because the message had not been delivered, in his opinion, as effectively or faithfully as it might, and adds: "I found out later that some of these very services had been memorable in the experience of a number who had been present as hearers." Dr. Davey's humility would not permit him to believe that he had done his best. Again he speaks of the care given by Dr. Davey to the preparation of his pulpit work, and says: "He wrote out his sermons in full, but I know the only written matter used in delivery consisted of condensed notes usually compressed into one half sheet of ordinary note-paper. This left him almost quite free to use any fresh thought occurring during the discourse, and thus his face, eyes, and at times his hands, all added their exposition and emphasis to the spoken word." To the time occupied by this careful preparation must be added, in any fair estimate of the work done in those days, a large weekly sick-list, with not a few cases calling for special

attention; funerals, which absorbed many hours and involved visits of consolation and sympathy; the work of chaplain to the Victoria Barracks, which involved heavy duties when regiments from Presbyterian Scotland happened to be quartered there; and the week-evening meetings, the evidences of a living Church, which were many and varied, in all of which he had an interest, and at many of which he had to be present in person, and usually to take a leading part. The present writer well remembers going out on Saturday mornings on what was, to him, the romantic adventure of accompanying his father in a hansom-cab, which he took to save time in completing as far as possible the sick-list visitation of the week, ere Sunday and a new week's work should be upon him; and sometimes twenty or thirty visits had to be paid before the pastor could return home with an easy mind to take up his final preparation for the pulpit work of the morrow. His day began at half-past seven in the morning; he spent most of the forenoons in his study, usually leaving home at two o'clock and not returning till eleven at night; on some days, however, he would leave home in the forenoon and return for the evening meal.

The writer last quoted tells, in another place, how on one occasion he asked Mr. Davey why he had left Ballymena to come to St. Enoch's. There he had a conveniently large congregation bound to him by ties of love and reverence, a manse near his church, and a stipend larger than could be promised to him as colleague of Dr. Hanna (for the sudden death of Dr. Hanna just three weeks after Mr. Davey had been installed, which left him sole minister of St. Enoch's, was an event none had dreamed of). "His reply was character-

istic of the man. In Ballymena he had many things for which a minister has deep cause to be grateful, but his sphere of work was in a degree limited. His congregation was formed of the same individuals week after week. In Belfast it would not be so; not only would his congregation be larger, but at every service he would be coming into contact with new people, and the opportunity would be given him of influencing many more lives than he could ever hope to reach by remaining in Ballymena. Self-interest, worldly prudence, said 'Remain,' but duty to his Master as a minister of His Gospel said 'Go.'" And the same writer continues: "Although always sympathetic and earnest, ever having his work as a servant of Jesus Christ nearest his heart, he had always a cheerful manner, and was in no way devoid of the faculty of humour. It peeped out now and then in his conversation. I well remember one occasion when, during the meeting of the General Assembly, I came up to him and two other city ministers talking together. One of them had asked me for information about houses to let on the Antrim Road (in the neighbourhood of St. Enoch's), as some friends of his in the country proposed coming to Belfast, and wished to settle in that district. The other minister looked at the minister of St. Enoch's, and thinking to get in a sly but friendly blow, said: 'Mr. Davey, they wish to pitch their tent toward Sodom.' Quick as thought came the reply, apt and scriptural, 'Ah! they know the plain is well watered, even as a garden of the Lord.'" The writer I have quoted closes his reminiscences with these generous words, referring to the final decision to leave St. Enoch's for Fisherwick, of which we shall have more to say in the chapter which follows this: "Some of his St. Enoch's friends were hard to convince that he did right in leaving

his ministry there for a suburban charge such as Fisherwick, and among these was myself. I have long since altered that opinion. Mr. Davey felt, as we could not, the duty resting on him to his wife, to his children, whose future was so largely in his keeping, and to himself in relation to these sacred trusts. The close and unremitting labour required by St. Enoch's, both physical and mental, was leaving its mark on him while as yet a comparatively young man; and he was quite conscious it was so. There is little doubt in my own mind that the serious illnesses of later years had their root cause in the strenuous years at Carlisle Circus; and the people of Fisherwick were kinder and more generous to him in these illnesses than the people of St. Enoch's, however willing, had it in their power to be." I give these words here, though chronologically out of place, because of their written relation to the foregoing reminiscences of the close and loyal friend and co-worker of Mr. Davey whom I have been so glad to quote in elaborating the picture of the St. Enoch's work during these earlier years.

When Mr. Davey came to St. Enoch's in 1892, the church was burdened with a heavy debt which the congregation were clearing off by slow degrees. In the winter of 1893, however, they decided upon a special effort to raise the £3,000 still required; and having subscribed £1,000 of it themselves, they determined to ask the community at large to help them with the balance. Mr. Davey was set free to go to London, Glasgow, Edinburgh, and a few other places to collect. It was work which he cordially disliked all his days, but which, none the less, he did as his duty with all the zeal he could muster; and he certainly received wonderful sympathy at this time, both at home and across the

water. Yet times of discouragement came often as he pursued the rather thankless task. One day he had had so many refusals that he felt like giving it all up, when he had the good fortune to meet Sir Donald Currie, who gave him £20 with such a grace that he felt heartened to go on. To assist the collection, it was determined to hold a great bazaar in December of the following year (1894), and to that undertaking the congregation bent all its energies. The bazaar was a great success, and the combined result of bazaar and collection was that the church cleared off the £3,000 debt, and had an extra £500 to do necessary repairs to the church building. For a single church, and that not a wealthy one, it was a colossal effort, and involved much work; but, largely owing to the hard work of the ladies of the congregation and of the neighbourhood, it had the striking success which I have recorded.

The next landmark in the history of St. Enoch's was the unpleasant controversy over the communion wine, which belongs to the year 1896, and which left upon his sensitive mind a wound which was never healed. He himself lost not a single friend by reason of the controversy, but none the less it did its work of permanent damage, both to his health—for it was the last straw to the overworked pastor of St. Enoch's—and to the church over whose spiritual work he had been set; the unity which had gathered round him for years was inevitably impaired, when he was driven by circumstances into the position of a partisan—the one thing above all others which he sought ever to avoid. Little good would come at this juncture from a detailed discussion of the rights and wrongs of the case, but briefly stated the position was as follows:—The temperance reform party in the

church desired the use of unfermented wine, and, finding it impossible to carry the congregation as a whole with them, asked that they should be allowed to have a second "table," at which unfermented wine should be used, and to which any who wished might come instead of going to the first or ordinary table, at which fermented wine was used; that is, they asked not for compulsion, but for an option. The conservative opposition to such an innovation, at first comparatively small, grew steadily in strength for one reason or another. Mr. Davey understood the standpoint of both parties, of those who clung to the old paths, and of those who abhorred a church connexion with the drink traffic; but his sympathies lay inevitably towards the reformers, especially as they were only asking liberty for their consciences: and it is but fair to remark that at this date in St. Enoch's many were actually abstaining from communion entirely, or from the cup, rather than partake of the alcoholic wine in use. The pastor sought, above all things, that the church should keep the unity of its faith in the bond of love. His was too wide a horizon, too sensitive a mind in its perception of the true value of things, to let him be a mere extremist; and upon him fell alike the blessing and the tribulation of the peacemaker. Many solutions were put forward and rejected; but in the end, by the narrowest of majorities, the compromise of the two "tables" was carried through; a compromise which he hoped would enable them to get on with the weightier matters of the church's work, but which he can hardly have visualized as anything but a temporary expedient to tide over an emergency until men's minds should have become clearer as to the fundamental issues of the question. The practice of the two tables—which had

been tried in other churches before it was adopted in St. Enoch's—continued while he was minister there, the first table being taken before and the second after the sermon. The recalcitrant minority in the session, however, appealed to the Presbytery, and when defeated there, to the General Assembly, which in 1896 was further memorialized to the same effect by a large number of the communicants, who asked that the change introduced be declared *ultra vires*, and the older custom of the one table enjoined. The Assembly, however, sustained Mr. Davey's action in carrying through a change which was a matter of liberty and not of compulsion, and dismissed the appeal after a brilliant and earnest speech which he made, covering the whole ground as fairly as he could. In after days, he said of that speech that he had never spoken in public more effectively or with greater ease. I might mention that on the other side, and earlier in the discussion, an able debating speech was made by Mr. M'Comb, who has left to history one *bon mot* at least which, for the sake of interest, is worthy of record at this point. In criticising the reforming party's emphasis upon a wine free from alcohol as being a point of view blind to other matters of greater import, he said: "In the old days the communicant's text was 'Let a man examine himself'; to-day it seems to be 'Let a man examine the wine'!"

Without a dissentient voice the Assembly had supported Mr. Davey, and enjoined mutual forbearance upon the congregation; and things at St. Enoch's settled down quietly once more into the routine of useful Christian work as aforetime. But the strain of those days, added to the overwork of years, had left its mark upon the pastor, and in 1897 he was compelled to take a special holiday in order to regain his health. In May

1897 he was thrown from a car, dislocating his shoulder, and the shock pushed him nearer to a nervous breakdown than he had yet been. As an indication of his condition, I might mention that one morning shortly after his accident he received a depressing letter from a prominent member of his church, which so troubled him that he went over in a faint. Nervous exhaustion told in other ways also; he began to lose his voice; and before long he could scarcely, even in the pulpit, speak above a loud whisper. Overwork had at last taken its revenge, and the doctors advised a complete rest and change for at least three months. His life had known two periods of extraordinary activity—the years of his work as an itinerant evangelist, and these first four years at St. Enoch's; and each of these periods of undoubted strain reaped its harvest of ill-health. A minor breakdown had followed his settlement in Ballymena, and now a more serious breakdown had succeeded the second period. His life was to know two others still more severe before its close; but, for the present, one thing was becoming evident—the pace was too hot to last. It was only a question of time till he, a married man with a young family dependent upon him, should have either to curtail his work at St. Enoch's or to drop it. The first proved impossible, and in the end the choice of a smaller field was forced upon him, as will be told in due course.

I should like at this point to make clear the responsibility, in part, of a defect in our Presbyterian system for this unfortunate position, and, in part, the inevitableness of the position under any system. The work at St. Enoch's in these days was far too heavy for an ordained minister with a licentiate assistant and a lay missionary,

for the ministerial work proper had nearly all to be done by the one man; little of Mr. Davey's own work could be delegated to another. One Episcopal clergyman in the neighbourhood said to him one day: "If your church belonged to us, you would have not one but eight curates to assist you"; and certainly under episcopal control Mr. Davey would have had at least a number of such subordinates to help him, all ordained ministers of the Church and able to take a great deal of the properly ministerial work upon their shoulders, because recognised by the people as actual ministers. The system of a collegiate pastorate might be suggested as one means of meeting the difficulty, but the objections to such a solution are in practice enormous: the true solution, so far as there can be one, seems to lie in the ordination of licentiates. But even with a staff of ordained ministerial assistants the work must, I think, have remained too great for any man; no system could cope with the inevitable drift of a city population towards a ministry recognised as prophetic and abnormally successful. In the country, the size of congregations is largely fixed by circumstances; in the city there is no barrier to indefinite development where a successful and popular ministry is found; and when abnormal pastoral gifts are added to a prophetic ministry, no system could be devised, in the circumstances of a populous city neighbourhood like Carlisle Circus, with easy access from all parts, which would keep within reasonable bounds the growth of the congregation in question. Mr. Davey, in his overwork, was the victim of his own unusual gifts; and the only solution which was finally practicable was to leave the vicinity. Again and again, before the inevitable separation, it was urged upon him that he should be content with less work, and dele-

gate much of it to his assistant; but, apart from his own difficulty about lowering his ideal of satisfactory work, the carrying out of such a suggestion was in practice a very different matter from its adumbration in theory. All the St. Enoch's people, and I think with truth, regarded themselves and their families as his especial friends, and their advice regarding a reduction of work might, I think, not unfairly be interpreted thus: "You will of course give us, your close friends, your attention and visits as usual, but you need not go so often to so-and-so." Mr. Davey knew that to attempt to cut down his work in this way would lead to soreness, and that, however people might try to explain away to themselves a deliberate neglect on his part as necessary for his health, they would not be satisfied. By this time, though the break did not come for years, the realisation was being borne in upon him that, for a man burdened with the primary responsibilities of a home and a family, there was no prospect either of overtaking the work at St. Enoch's or of an indefinite continuance in that pastorate. The congregation was overgrown, unwieldy, and increasingly impossible to serve adequately in spiritual things; it could only be a question of time till he must surrender it. For the present, however, he had no call to leave St. Enoch's, only to get well; the breaking-point had not been reached, and his first obvious duty was to recuperate by a holiday, for the purpose of going on as satisfactorily as possible with the work which lay to hand, to which he had been called by the voice of God, and from which he would never be parted without a terrible agony of mind and soul. In this connection let me remark that it is a striking commentary upon the failure of the Presbyterian system of the past, with its single congregational

ministry, as applied to the modern city, that the percentage of breakdowns among the clergymen of Belfast has been so high ; one has only to look at the records of our city churches, especially of the larger charges, in this matter, to realise how severe must be the strain of such a pastorate, and how necessary, in the interests both of humanity and of the Kingdom of God, is some modification of our system which will lighten, so far as possible, the burden resting upon the spiritual leaders of our Presbyterian community.

It was decided that Mr. Davey should take a trip to South Africa, receiving three months' leave for that purpose, the chief burden of the church work in the meantime being borne by Rev. W. A. Hill, now of Bangor, who had become Mr. Davey's assistant shortly before this date, and by Mr. Duncan Kirkwood, whose name has already been mentioned. This enforced pilgrimage in quest of health, during the summer of 1897, forms the natural point of division between the earlier and the later years of Mr. Davey's ministry at Carlisle Circus, and so fitly closes another chapter in this record of his life.

CHAPTER VI

THE LATER YEARS AT ST. ENOCH'S

The glory of going on

WHEN Mr. Davey left home, he thought he was going to a land where he would be a lonely stranger, knowing no one; judge of his surprise and pleasure, when he arrived at Cape Town, to find waiting for him on the quay one whom he had led to decision for Christ in earlier days. This friend, who had come to welcome him on his own account, had also been asked by Mr. W. M. Cuthbert to bring Mr. Davey to his beautiful home outside the town as soon as the vessel should arrive. So, to his surprise, he was at once escorted thither; and, indeed, the kindness of Mr. Cuthbert, his self-constituted host, throughout the whole time of his stay in South Africa, was extraordinary. Through him he was introduced to a number of outstanding men, who were able in different parts of the country to make his visit most fascinating, by procuring him access to places of peculiar interest. At Kimberley he saw through the diamond mines. At Johannesburg he saw the whole process by which the gold is extracted from the quartz that is mined there. In Pretoria he had the honour of a bow from the ill-starred President Krüger. War was in the air, and, though it was two years before it actually

broke out, the Transvaal, as he saw it, was already well armed and fortified. He preached once or twice, notably at Magersfontein and Johannesburg, apparently without feeling any the worse for it. Finally, he returned from his peregrinations to Cape Town, where his kind friends, Mr. and Mrs. Cuthbert, once more took possession of him until he embarked for home in August. During the voyage out, and while in South Africa, he had allowed his beard to grow, with the idea that it might be good for his throat, which had been congested for some time; thus, by the time he reached home, his countenance was considerably altered: a fact which led to a number of amusing experiences among those who were ignorant of his changed appearance. When he first appeared in the pulpit on Sunday, one old lady in the gallery was heard to give vent to her disappointment in the words, "I thought we were to have our ain man the day"; but when she heard the voice she was comforted. The children in the schools would not believe that it was Mr. Davey. At the congregational reception, one of the speakers, a member both of St. Enoch's congregation and of the City Council, made the happy remark, "The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the face is the face of Esau." But Mr. Davey was not over fond of his newly-acquired possession, and a few years later, during his holiday, he removed it, and resumed his former appearance. A photograph is all that is left to remind us of those bearded years, and I think that most of his friends were glad to see him once more as they had known him for so long. At the reception mentioned above, on 3rd September, 1897, the congregation gave proof of their affectionate esteem, by a number of most valuable presentations to himself and Mrs. Davey; and his work

in St. Enoch's started again with most happy omens. The work of the year or two which immediately followed his return home was perhaps as fruitful and remarkable as any part of his ministry,

Mr. Hill, who was his ministerial assistant for a couple of years at this time, has written for us some of his reminiscences of the work of these days, in a letter which is one of the warmest and most definite of all the tributes that have been paid to his memory by those who have been good enough to help us in writing. Referring to this period, he writes: "My two happy years with him in St. Enoch's I can never forget. He then held, Sunday after Sunday, what was admittedly the largest congregation in Ireland of any denomination, spell-bound by his love-inspired eloquence. His Gospel was the same as in the earlier days, but richer and deeper in its content; and rarely a Sunday passed without someone inquiring the Way of Life, and frequently not a few. And many must have entered the Kingdom without any personal interview at all; for his message was always so clear a direction to 'the way,' that a wayfaring man needed not to err therein. It was, however, his custom to be in the vestry of the church every Monday evening from seven o'clock, to receive and help his people in private interviews; and although I was, of course, never there, I know that many went to speak with him about their soul's salvation: and that old vestry, where I often had the unspeakable privilege of joining him in prayer, must have been the blessed trysting-place of many a soul with Christ. Dr. Davey, as might be expected, was a strong believer in the need and efficacy of a special mission now and again. In my time with him, there were two such missions: the first was conducted

by Mr. W. R. Lane, and, so far as I can remember, was attended with a good deal of blessing; but the second mission has left a deeper impression on my memory. It was in the month of February, 1898, when the Belfast Presbytery had arranged for a simultaneous mission in all the churches within its bounds. The mission was held in St. Enoch's for the week arranged, and the meetings were addressed, night after night, by various ministers, and all the meetings were fairly well attended. Some blessing was manifest,—enough to encourage a continuance of the meetings. These continued meetings were among the most remarkable I have known in all my experience. There were no strangers invited to preach; Mr. Davey, for the most part, did all the preaching. His message was generally a very simple and clear presentation of the Gospel, and an invitation to receive the Lord Jesus Christ; and the people were so moved by the Holy Spirit, that no night passed without from a dozen to a score of persons professing to find Christ as their Saviour, and to obey and follow Him as Master and Lord. After the lapse of more than twenty years I cannot recall names, but I remember that they were all members of St. Enoch's Church, and among them was one family—father, mother, and several sons and daughters—all of whom were brought into the Kingdom during those meetings. When I reflect on the amount of work Mr. Davey got through in those days, I am filled with amazement. The visitation he did would alone have taxed the energies of most men, for his were no perfunctory tasks. He carried with him the words of eternal life; and, though he never had time to spend in mere social formalities, he was never in a hurry where he could bring help and comfort to anybody. His

presence and his prayers were a very benediction to his people. It is sometimes perilous to come into very close intimacy with men who are very successful and popular in the ministry and other callings of life, lest some measure of disillusionment may follow, but not the shade of a shadow of such a peril was possible in regard to Dr. Davey. Success never spoiled him in the smallest degree. After all life's triumphs—and there are few whose triumphs were greater than his—he was the same humble-minded, gentle-hearted, great-souled man at the end, and all through his life, that he was at the beginning. I am sorry that it has never been my habit to keep notes. If that had been my habit, especially during my assistantship in St. Enoch's, I am sure I could have furnished you with valuable material, for a richer or more blessed ministry than Mr. Davey's, as I knew it, could not easily be found." The mission recorded in the foregoing quotation is one of the spiritual landmarks of these later years, and shows that there had been no diminution in the blessing which the divine love was bestowing upon the congregation through its devoted pastor. His breakdown had not robbed him of any of his spiritual power.

One of his friends, writing of these days, says that one certain secret of his power in the pulpit was his keen and shrewd observation of human nature. He had a mind which missed nothing; the minutiæ of thought and character, upon which the whole superstructure of life rests, were as an open book to his quick penetrating vision. It was this intimate knowledge and understanding of his hearers which made his appeals and reasoning often so pointed and practical that one felt his sermons to be personal talks. But his power as a preacher was no greater for good than his power as a man in his daily

walk and conversation, as he moved among his flock. We have had, again and again, the testimony from those who knew him well, both in these and in other days, that his life was to them an inspiration and ideal; it was Christianity embodied in human flesh,—a Christianity which was warm, lovely, thorough, and practical. One friend of the St. Enoch's days writes of "the reverence—I almost said worship—with which I regarded him." This extraordinary sense of reverence for the purity, devotion, and fulness of his life and personality was more than a mere emotion; it was a practical power for goodness, and for many has remained so to this day.

Another writer, a St. Enoch's worker, now in the ministry, says: "When tempted to a mean, unchristian course of action, tempted to be less than myself, I have often asked myself 'What would Mr. Davey think of such a thing?' or 'What would he think of me if I yielded to this thing?' and when confronted with difficulties and perplexities, I have put to myself the question 'What would Mr. Davey do if he were in this position?'" Such words are surely one of the greatest tributes that could be paid to the personal religion of any man, that he should become to his friends an embodiment of the Christian ideal. Nor was his religion ever felt to be one of dreamy idealism or blind devotion; all who knew him recognised his shrewdness and practical common-sense; and to the end of his life he was the resort of many a soul needing counsel in difficulties. I have known men travel long distances to talk things over with him in some crisis or perplexing situation in which they felt they needed sound guidance. His transparent sincerity, his keen mind, his devotion in faith and works, and his shrewd common-sense, made him confidant and adviser-in-chief to many

a life which touched his, alike in the earlier and the later days of his Christian ministry. And of the depth and scope of the influence which his friendship carried with it, one friend of the long past writes: "I cannot estimate what the friendship of Charles Davey meant to me, but I am perfectly convinced that, in his genius for friendship *alone*, he could not have failed to have a big share in helping weary and heavy-laden wights to rise on 'stepping-stones of their dead selves to higher things.'"

The atmosphere of St. Enoch's in these days, so often commented upon in the reminiscences of those who had had the opportunity of breathing it, was the atmosphere which had been created by his unique personality—an atmosphere of faith and expectation, of energy and practical religion, of devotion and unquestioning surrender to the highest; even visitors to the church were impressed at once by the power of this spiritual and contagious emanation from a personality in touch with God and abiding continually in His presence. A member of the church, a watchmaker, tells how an Irish-American on a visit to this country brought him a valuable watch which required some rather delicate repairs, handing it over with much reluctance and with great emphasis upon the need of care. On Sunday, the visitor, still worried about the treatment his timepiece might possibly receive at careless hands, attended St. Enoch's Church. The preacher, and the atmosphere created by his ministry, both impressed him deeply, and he was delighted to observe among the congregation, as it made its way out, the man into whose hands he had entrusted the watch. When he came for it to the shop some days later, he told how the worry had left his mind when he found his watchmaker in St. Enoch's. "I knew

then," he said, "that my job would be all right, for a man who attends St. Enoch's, and listens to that man in the pulpit, will do his work well." It was a spontaneous testimony to the power of Mr. Davey's ministry in St. Enoch's as the power of a practical godliness, and as making for the elevation and strengthening of all that worthily concerns human life.

The beginning of the Boer War fell within this period of Mr. Davey's ministry in St. Enoch's. He was Presbyterian chaplain in those days to the Victoria Barracks, beside his church, and at the time of the outbreak of the war the barracks were partly occupied by a battalion of the King's Own Scottish Borderers. He used to visit the barracks during the week, when he had many an interesting conversation with the men, and on Sunday morning they came to St. Enoch's and filled the upper gallery, which the seatholders generously surrendered *in toto* to them. At length, however, orders came for them to go to the front, with but a few days allowed for preparation. The members of the church determined to give the soldiers a hearty send-off, and they were invited to supper in the schools behind the church. Those interested in the success of the evening were told that it would be difficult to induce soldiers to come of their own free will to an entertainment of the kind, but they went on with their arrangements for an attendance of no less than a thousand; and, not stinting the good things, the tables certainly were made to look inviting. Some members who arrived early upon the scene saw several soldiers reconnoitring, and apparently with satisfactory results! As a consequence, by eight o'clock every seat was filled, and even the officers, who had at first declined the invitation, turned up in force. After the needs of the

body had been satisfactorily attended to, there was an entertainment of music, speeches, and recitation, and this was closed by a few earnest words from the pastor suited to the hour, some of the men being greatly moved. On the previous Sunday Mr. Davey had preached a farewell sermon to them upon the words "A good soldier of Jesus Christ"; and as they left the hall upon this night of the social gathering to bid them God-speed, a printed copy of the sermon in question was given to each man. Many of them never returned from their warfare, but lie buried on the South African veldt.

During these days of strenuous work at St. Enoch's, as also in Ballymena, Mr. Davey had a great deal of practical experience of the drink problem. Again and again he was brought into contact with those who had given way to the craving, and was enabled by the grace of God, which ever attended his footsteps, to bring many of them back to a sober life, rescuing their lives from shipwreck and their homes from a perpetual misery. He had a wonderful influence with such men, and not only with them, but with their weary, careworn wives, whom he helped and encouraged never to give up hope of better days. His tenacity, in a work where tenacity of purpose is one of the essentials of success, enabled him to succeed where others had failed. A wife who had prayed for eighteen years for her drunken husband had the extraordinary joy of seeing him steady and sober once more until his death, a little over a year after his reclamation, when he passed away leaving very happy memories behind him. Another man who had been a hard drinker for many years was won to give up use of intoxicants completely; he gave way only once or twice during the remaining twenty years of his life. Yet another had been not only a drinker, but

the keeper of a public-house. Under Mr. Davey's preaching his life was changed, and he gave up the use of intoxicants himself; but the giving up of his business was a harder matter. Once and again his pastor pleaded with him to take his hands from the work of leading others into the bondage that he had known himself; at last he was constrained to take the step of cutting his connection with the trade, and seeking a cleaner livelihood. He found other work, though not so lucrative, and has led a consistent and helpful Christian life ever since. Even in his Fisherwick days, I can remember Dr. Davey going across the city to seek and find someone who had again wandered forth from the fold by reason of a recrudescence of the old craving; for appeals would come to him to try once more to reclaim those whom he alone had been able to influence in the old days. Such work calls for patience and much faith. Mr. Davey had both of these essentials in abundant measure, and they were among the secrets of his power in this work. He never gave up hope of anyone, but all through his life, in quiet and unobtrusive ways, he persisted in keeping in touch with such as he had been called upon to lift out of the mire in former days.

Some of his best work was done among the young men of the families connected with his congregation, who were not easily susceptible to pastoral influence. His tenacity, his humility, his kindness, and his sympathy, made many a doorway for the entrance of his message and influence. I remember him telling us one day of how he had succeeded at last in getting into contact with some young men living in a street near St. Enoch's Church, who were in the habit of beating a retreat whenever he appeared in the vicinity of their home. As he

reached the front door, they would slip out by the back. But he had diagnosed the situation, and, being anxious to get to know them, on the day in question he made his descent upon the back door instead of the front, just as they, having seen him in the street, were making their way to safety as usual. The sporting character of the manœuvre won their hearts, and in a few minutes they were fast friends. Some other young men equally shy of ministerial visits he followed on one occasion down an entry, in which they had taken refuge, and ran them to earth; they appreciated the humour of the situation, and, the ice thus easily broken, they were soon on the best of terms, and well on their way to lose the fear that was, and is, bred of clerical clothes. In all his work he showed the same tenacity, the same thoroughness, and the same humour; he was in earnest about his work, but he never let earnestness obscure his sense of humour or take the twinkle from his eyes—that twinkle that won so many hearts.

During the years he was minister of St. Enoch's he was approached on two or three occasions by other congregations with a view to making out a call to him. About a year after he had returned from South Africa, he received several pressing letters from a London congregation, the members of which remembered vividly and well a mission he had held there when he was working for the North London Presbytery; but, in spite of great inducements, he could not at that time see his way to leave St. Enoch's. About the same time, a deputation came twice from a leading congregation in his own city to see if he would come to them. He refused in this instance also, but it was none the less being borne in upon him with increasing emphasis that he could not long work as he was doing without the gravest results.

His own conscience was his taskmaster, and he had the instinct of the true shepherd; every member of his flock had to be cared for, and he could not let things slip whether others advised him in that direction or not. One friend writes, "He would be greatly concerned about a fancied neglect of some old woman in a back street whose few shillings of stipend meant nothing to him." But he had never learnt a commercial respect of persons; the "old woman in a back street" was just as important an item in his pastorate as if she had lived in one of the mansions of the wealthy. Try as he would, he never could overtake his work; even what *must* be done seemed often to be overlooked for sheer lack of time. Some faint idea of the work done may be gathered from the knowledge that his sick-list alone in winter-time held over two hundred names per week; and scarcely a week passed without four or five funerals. The amount of time involved in the visitation of the sick, the accompanying of funerals often for long distances, and the visits before and after deaths which were called for in a pastor, was in itself enormous, and yet these were but a minor part of his active work of ministry. It was an increasingly difficult matter to get time for study, yet he would never consent to curtail his work for the pulpit, rarely even would he preach a sermon for the second time even when requested to do so. He was at this time compelled to allocate certain hours for interviewing such members of his congregation as wished to see him, but such expedients were of little avail in a congregation of that size, with multitudinous matters continually cropping up and requiring personal attention. His assistant at the time was Mr. (now Professor) Haire, and a more willing and devoted worker there could not

have been. But St. Enoch's called for a larger staff of ministers than it was within the possibilities of our system to give; and, when every moment of the day had been packed with work, the work was still undone, and the worry of that knowledge grew as his health weakened under the strain. The breaking-point could not be far off, and he knew it. All these years he had very little home life—a fact he felt keenly. While he was in the house, his study necessarily claimed him, and his children saw little of him. Saturday was the only evening he spent at home; and though most of it had to be given to his preparation for the services of the morrow, it was nevertheless a very special evening for the children. Sunday was, of course, one of his busiest days, and the minister himself had no "Sabbath." All his life he had seven days a week of strenuous work, and a morning perhaps once a fortnight was the most he could be induced to take off. The one day in the year that he gave wholly to his family, excepting, of course, the holiday month in the summer, was Easter Monday, and it was looked forward to with the keenest anticipation by all: even Christmas Day was rarely free from the ministerial duties of preaching and visitation.

The fact that he was nearing another breakdown in health, which was being brought home to his intelligence more clearly as the days passed, made him see how inevitable on his part was some step which should lighten the burden of life for him, some step which should give him such work as he might be able to continue doing without perpetual overdrafts upon his physical capital; therefore, when the congregation of Fisherwick Place Church approached him in the summer of 1900, with the desire that he should become their pastor in succession

to Dr. Williamson, he did not put the invitation aside as he had done others, feeling that it might, indeed, be God's call to him. But it was not an easy matter to decide. He was deeply attached to his congregation in St. Enoch's, and no one could have had a more loving and devoted people; some of them were among his very best and truest friends, and he realised what it would mean to them. He also knew how he himself would miss the immense congregations of St. Enoch's, which were even then such a source of inspiration and encouragement to him; but he was anxious, above every thing else, to do what he thought to be the will of God in relation to the matter. I might add that, at the very same time, he was approached for the second time by a London congregation. He took some time to think the whole situation over; and when he went to Portrush in July, he determined to make that month a special time of seeking for guidance in prayer. Early in that month, at a meeting in St. Enoch's during his absence on holiday, the following resolution was passed: "(1) That we, the members of St. Enoch's congregation, take this opportunity of giving united expression to our unbounded confidence in our pastor, Rev. Charles Davey, and to our admiration of his unremitting and devoted labours since he came amongst us; and we rejoice at the many evidences of Divine blessing that have accompanied his ministry in St. Enoch's. (2) That we, understanding it to be the intention of Fisherwick Place Church to present a call to Rev. Charles Davey, do hereby declare that it is our firm conviction that the importance and magnitude of the Lord's work in St. Enoch's is of such a character as to forbid Mr. Davey's acceptance of the said call, and hereby resolve that a thoroughly representative depu-

tation of our church members be hereby appointed to proceed to Portrush and place our views before him, urging him, in the interests of the Master's work in St. Enoch's, to decline the call from Fisherwick Place." The deputation, numbering fifteen in all, came to Portrush and sought him out, and each member spoke in turn; they bared their hearts to him that day, and all were moved to tears as they pleaded with him to remain as the pastor of St. Enoch's, where God had so manifestly blessed his labours. He often said that was the hardest day in his life, for his heart was with them all the time: as he remarked to his wife immediately after the meeting, "My heart says 'Stay,' but my head says 'Go.'" "Only," he added, "you must not let them know I feel like that, for I am afraid to give them the least encouragement, because I know that I cannot last long at the rate I am going. At least, I must not decide hastily." He looked perfectly haggard that night. None of his St. Enoch's friends ever knew how much the decision to sever his connection with them cost him; had they known, the voice of criticism would have been silenced. Some even thought he was influenced in his action to some extent by pecuniary considerations; but never did money matters bias his decision to change the place of his ministry, as in each case the change was to a smaller income—both in his migration from Ballymena to St. Enoch's, and in his translation from St. Enoch's to Fisherwick: a fact which has not always been so clearly recognised as it ought in all fairness to be. In the end, his decision was made to go, and on Sabbath, 19th August, Mr. Davey occupied the pulpit of St. Enoch's for the last time as pastor of the congregation, having accepted the call from Fisherwick on the previous Tues-

day. Alluding to his action, and bidding good-bye to the congregation to which he had ministered for eight memorable years, he said: "I cannot preach a farewell sermon, nor is it necessary in this case that I should. But it is due to you that I should give some explanation of my action this past week. Let me assure you that what I have done I have done as the outcome of careful thought and earnest prayer, and not without much pain to myself. No one who knows how completely I have given myself up to St. Enoch's can imagine that I would break my connection with you lightly or without feeling. To every other interest in life I have given a subordinate place, or no place at all, in order that I might be able to do my work here, or at least as much of it as one man could do. I came here, it is true, with the full intention of staying my lifetime. The parting from my congregation in Ballymena had cost me so much that I never wished to have another such experience; and the field of labour here was large enough and good enough to satisfy the ambition of any man. It is only fair, however, to say that I was hoping to have the help of my great predecessor for many years. Could I have foreseen that, in a few weeks, he would be taken from me, I should have hesitated about taking up such a work at all. But I have no doubt that the hand of the Lord was in it all.

"If you ask me why I leave this congregation—so large, so influential, and with such a field of labour,—my reply is that I have a conviction I could not continue to do the work of it. This conviction has been growing and deepening for at any rate the past two years, and you will admit that I am at least as good a judge in this matter as any other person can be. To be always in arrears with one's work, and that without the least hope

of improvement, produces a feeling akin to despair. I am not morbid, nor have I any inordinate love of life, but we are not mere units, and there are some things we may not do. It will be said in reply that there was every desire to lighten my work, and that offers were made to me to this effect. Let me say that I heartily appreciated those offers; I had no doubt of their sincerity and of the goodwill that prompted them; but I could not see, with all my knowledge of the circumstances of the congregation, how they could be made practicable to any material extent for me. Whatever the leaders of a congregation may agree about in a crisis, our Presbyterian people are slow to accept the services of any other person in the place of their minister; and it is specially difficult for a minister, after working for years along certain lines, to begin to make radical changes in his methods of work without being greatly misunderstood.

"But it may be said again that God in His providence sent me here, and of that I have no doubt. It has often been my plea in prayer when I felt as if I would be overwhelmed, when my brain was reeling, when I could hardly have told you at night whether I had done a certain thing in the morning, so much had to be put into the day; this was my plea, 'Lord, Thou hast sent me here; Thou wilt sustain me.' But may not the Great Master at His pleasure remove one of His servants from a trying post as you would yours, and give another a spell of it? Let me assure the congregation that if I have any spiritual insight, any power of perceiving the Divine will, I am as certain that I am doing the will of God as I have ever been in connection with any matter; I have never searched my heart so deeply, I have never looked to Heaven so intently about anything.

"Before closing, let me thank those, with whom I have been associated in work here, for the strength and comfort they have been to me. No minister ever had better helpers than I have had. I should like to have visited many of you at your work or in your homes, but I think, for your sakes as well as mine, it is better not. I am not going out of the city; we shall meet again when feeling is not so intense. Let me ask you not to judge me unfairly or unkindly in this matter. Try to put yourselves in my place. Had it been merely a question of friendship, I should never have left you; for I have as good friends here as I can ever have, and I have loved this congregation—God is my witness!—very tenderly. I shall never cease while I live to pray for your prosperity. To some of you God has sent many a message through these lips; to not a few God has honoured me as the instrument of your salvation; and I have been with many of you when the home was dark and you were smitten with sorrow. We shall not forget. I am content to leave the matter with you and with God."

Writing a few days later from Scotland, where he was taking a brief respite before entering upon his new sphere of labour, he says, in a letter to a prominent Christian worker in St. Enoch's: "I have been trying to forget what I have passed through in the last month. It seems almost like a dream. I can hardly realise that I am not the minister of St. Enoch's; but I suppose it really is so. Mrs. Davey left me yesterday for home, and I have taken up my abode here [Oban] for a few days. I want to do some reading and thinking and to get ready for the next step; I almost feel as if life were beginning with me again."

SERMON ECHOES

III

Do not quarrel with the Providence that shuts you in and makes a hedge about you, but try to understand that it is God's carefulness for you. The hedge has two sides: it closes in and also closes out.

We gloss over the maladies of the soul as we would never gloss over the maladies of the body.

Nothing pains me more—not even their sin and folly—than the purposelessness of the average human being.

The prayer that does not move you does not move Him.

There are some men and their thought is all breadth, but has no depth or height.

A man is known by the company he keeps. A man is not less surely known by the company he keeps out of.

You will never get to be any bigger than you are at home, or better than you are at home.

If you can keep your religion all to yourself, there is little to keep.

The early Christians were accustomed to speak of the great matters of pardon, reconciliation, and peace. Would your daily conversation betray you in these matters?

Many try to warm themselves at the glow of their *future* piety.

Photo by A. R. Hogg, Belfast

FISHERWICK PLACE CHURCH, BELFAST

CHAPTER VII

FISHERWICK: OLD AND NEW

The white flower of a blameless life

THE installation of Mr. Davey as minister of Fisherwick Place Church took place on Friday, 7th September, 1900, and on the following Wednesday the public reception was held in the Wellington Hall. The fine old church in Fisherwick Place, associated with the faithful and fruitful ministries of Dr. Morgan and Dr. Williamson, was in its last days. The new building, about a mile farther out from the city centre, was almost completed; but for eight months yet the congregation worshipped within the old walls, hallowed by so many sacred memories, and dear, not only to the congregation which had called Mr. Davey to preside over its spiritual life, but also to the pastor himself and his wife; for in the old days both, unknown to each other as yet, had been members, and contemporaneously, of that congregation in the days of Dr. Williamson, and both had been communicants within its Christian fellowship.

On 4th April, 1901, however, the days of the old church were numbered, and the congregation moved out to its new home on the Malone Road. The old building and its schools were ultimately acquired by the General Assembly as a site for its Assembly Hall and permanent

offices, and for this purpose the noble old pile had to suffer demolition. The new church was known as "Fisherwick," the word "Place" being of necessity dropped; and ninety per cent. of the old congregation kept their connection. Later on a very fine organ was installed, and the new church more than retained the reputation of the old for good music. The membership increased rapidly for many years, and the old traditions of the congregation were in every way maintained; in every Christian enterprise at home and abroad new Fisherwick kept in the front rank.

Besides his church work, Mr. Davey had always been keenly interested in the philanthropic institutions of the city, being a member of the Boards of several. His chief activities along this line were in connection with the Old Poorhouse or Charitable Institution in Clifton Street, and with the Royal Hospital, and the Deaf and Dumb and Blind Institution, in all of which he did long and useful service as a governor. It may be interesting to some to know that, before the new Royal Victoria Hospital was opened by King Edward, he and Dean Seaver, who had a warm friendship for each other, held a little service of their own in one of the wards, a few days before the public ceremony of the Royal opening, so dedicating the new building to the glory of God.

He was also very specially interested in several of the schemes and activities of the General Assembly. In 1901 he was appointed Convener of one of its most important committees, that on the State of Religion; a position peculiarly onerous, as it involved the reading, and reducing to the limits of a single report for the yearly Blue Book, of the many local reports upon that subject from congregations, presbyteries, and synods. He took

this work very seriously, and did it, as all else, with the utmost thoroughness; before the May committees he always retired to the quiet of the seaside for about a week to prepare the report in question, and it was a hard week's work. This convenership also entailed the control and direction of the Assembly's evangelistic work throughout the country. He was pre-eminently the man for such a position, in view of his own experience and knowledge of that work in bygone days; but none the less, he found it a very heavy addition to his congregational duties. The correspondence called for with regard to the holding of missions, and the further correspondence which he found necessary in the raising of the requisite funds for the carrying on of this evangelistic work, were heavy items in the case of one who was no facile letter-writer at any time. In the winter of 1905 he had a breakdown in health, partly the aftermath, long delayed, of the last years in St. Enoch's, and partly the result of his present Fisherwick work, with the extra burden of the convenership of which I have just spoken. He was compelled to take a holiday, and to resign the position of Convener of the committee in question at the first Assembly following; *i.e.*, in 1906. The work of the congregation had been well and faithfully done in every department of its life, but he was no longer a young man of robust and undamaged constitution. The years of overwork had left their permanent mark upon his life, and a complete break with work had again become necessary. Three months' rest was once more prescribed by the doctors, and the committee of Fisherwick Church very generously gave him a cheque to defray expenses. He left home just before Christmas 1905, and spent the first fortnight wandering about Paris, Milan, Florence,

Rome, and Naples. At Naples he ascended Vesuvius; at Rome he was gripped by the magnificence of St. Peter's, and often told us, too, of the joy with which he discovered beneath its dome an Irish priest, whose voice was redolent of the homeland, and with whom, in that land of strangers, he had a most interesting and friendly conversation. He then crossed the Mediterranean to Egypt, where he spent six happy weeks in the dryest of climates, and enjoyed greatly seeing the old remains of historical interest, the Pyramids, the Sphinx, the old temples and the great statues at Luxor, Karnak, and Philæ, and the great modern dam at Assouan. He used to say that he never realised the meaning of such words as "the shadow of a great rock in a weary land," until he stood in the shade of a high rock in the desert amid the pitiless heat of Egypt's sun. Sailing from Port Said, he came on his return journey to Genoa, passing Vesuvius once more, this time in full eruption, and thence to Switzerland, where he spent the last month of his holiday, and where, after a few days, his wife joined him. The congregation gave him a very hearty welcome home at a reception in the new Assembly Hall in March 1906.

Fisherwick Church is a handsome Gothic building, seating about twelve hundred people almost all on the ground floor, and it cost about £25,000 to erect. The sale of the old church and its grounds to the General Assembly, as the site for their Church House, gave the congregation a good start financially towards meeting the cost of their own new church buildings; but there was still a large deficit to be cleared off. Two or three times liberal subscription lists had been made up, and some of the debt was also being paid off year by year; but progress was slow and the burden was heavy. So another

Photo by A. R. Hogg, Belfast

FISHERWICK CHURCH, BELFAST

and a greater effort was initiated in 1908. Sir Donald Currie, who had been a Sabbath-school scholar in old Fisherwick and a member of the church in his early days, and who still retained a deep interest in it, offered to give one half of the money needed if the congregation subscribed the other half in a given time. By dint of hard work and generous subscriptions throughout the congregation this was finally accomplished, and Sir Donald thereupon handed over a cheque for £1,226 12*s.* —surely a most generous donation! The church was now free of debt and able to stand upon its own feet, and none rejoiced more than the pastor that it was so; for a condition of debt meant an element of paralysis in the proper work of the church and a large number of pulpit references to money affairs, and even those begging appeals which he so cordially disliked. It was a great joy to him to feel at last that he and the congregation were free of the millstone of a large debt, and could give their undivided energies to those things of the spirit which are the first concern of every congregation of the Church of God.

There is little or nothing to record as outstanding in the history of the next five years; it was a time of unremitting labour and faithful ministry in all the activities and departments of the church's work. Mr. Davey was incapable of taking things easily; he worked up to the limit of his strength; and since his St. Enoch's days that limit was all too easily reached, and not infrequently transgressed at the call of need. Such work, while it won for him in Fisherwick a universal affection and influence, rare even in the work of the ministry, could have but one ending for a man who was growing older and whose health had already given clear evidence of

the need of care. He did, indeed, seek continually to husband his strength, after the severe lessons regarding his physical limitations which he had received in 1897 and 1905; but his heart was too big for a nice adjustment of his margin, and in 1911 came the inevitable breakdown, more serious and of greater duration than any which had preceded it, being accompanied this time by arterial trouble. When first he became unable to continue at his work it was thought that a voyage of some kind would be beneficial; so a few kind friends in the congregation sent him two tickets for a trip to Norway and the North Cape. As the first boat did not sail for some weeks, he and his wife spent a fortnight first at Princetown, the highest town in England, on the edge of Dartmoor. They then embarked for Norway on 28th June, and had a most interesting trip, the weather being all that the heart could desire. The beautiful scenery of coast and headland, the magnificent fjords, the sun in its full glory at midnight, the many places of interest, and the companionship of kindred souls, were for him among the unforgettable things of life. On his return to London he was met by his eldest son, and they two went on to Mürren in Switzerland, but at the end of a month there he was so far from well—the stay in the mountains had only aggravated and not bettered his condition—that they came home again in the most sweltering heat and joined the family in Scotland. Feeling rather better, he returned to Belfast in October; but, on starting his work once more, he became so much worse that he was at once sent off for the winter to Donaghadee, where he and his family lived for five months. There he made such slow progress towards recovery that he was ordered away again, this time on

a long sea-voyage via the Cape to Australia. It was a source of great sorrow to him that he had to leave the congregation for so long, but he had no choice, as he was utterly unfit for work. Everything was made as easy as possible for him; the congregation, generous and sympathetic, sent him a cheque to defray the expenses of the journey; the charge of supplying the pulpit was also borne by them, and in every way he was given a minimum of anxiety in the affairs of the church. Mr. and Mrs. Davey left Belfast on 3rd April, 1912, and joined their ship at Liverpool. It was the second time Mr. Davey had made the journey to Cape Town, but this time he had someone with him to share its interest. Cape Town was the first port of call, where he had the pleasure of meeting again Mr. Cuthbert, his kind host of 1897; the next port was Albany in Western Australia, where they first realised the immense extent of that lonely continent. Adelaide was the next stopping-place, and, when going ashore here, Mrs. Davey was introduced to an Australian minister of another denomination, who told her of a trip he had paid to the old country twenty years before, when, by the advice of a friend, he had heard Mr. Davey in St. Enoch's on Sunday morning, and been so gripped that the evening found him back again in the same church, even though he had meant to attend the church of his fathers once at least upon that the only Sunday he spent in Belfast. At Melbourne the ship stopped four days, and they had the pleasure of staying with old friends, and of renewing their friendship with former members of Fisherwick. Finally they reached Sydney, their destination by steamer, in the end of May,—that most beautiful of harbours with its thousand miles of frontage. The extraordinary natural beauties and

wonders of the country round about—the Blue Mountains, the Caves of Jenolan, bush, river, waterfall, and forest,—all claimed and received in full measure their meed of attention and admiration; but over and above all these stands out the marvellous kindness of friends, old and new, as a thing sacred and never to be forgotten. Mr. Davey was, from the point of view of his restoration to health, particularly fortunate at this time in the friendship of two doctors, one of them a well-known city specialist, whose treatment was the turning-point in his long illness; and he now began, though with painful slowness, to climb up the ladder of health once more. After a stay of almost ten weeks in the country, they left Sydney for home on 5th August. One of their stopping-places was Durban, and here they had the pleasure of seeing old Ballymena friends. London was reached in the end of September, and 1st October found him once more steaming, to quote his own words, "up the silver streak that separates Antrim from Down." It was a great joy to be back in Belfast, and there was a hearty welcome for the travellers, but the excitement of it was almost too much for Mr. Davey. He was forced to take things very quietly at first, and did not preach for a month after his return; to go about among his friends for the first few weeks was as much as he could bear.

Death had been busy in the congregation during his long absence, and the ministry of consolation and sympathy was the first he was called upon to exercise, and he found it, as ever, a trying though blessed service. By degrees he became stronger, and for some years his progress towards better health was steady, but he was never in this life to regain his lost health in anything like full

measure. To the end of his days, and they were not long, he needed great care in the husbanding of his powers, and more assistance than he had ever before called for. He was rarely able to take more than one full service on Sundays, and the few occasions on which he tried two served but as warnings in their after-effects against overtaxing his strength. His limitations in this matter of preaching were a sore disappointment and trial to his eager spirit, and to a conscience that ever laid upon itself more than the flesh was built to endure. He spoke often with gratitude of the forbearance, the sympathy, and the generosity of the congregation in regard to these matters; but, none the less, it was a heavy cross to the willing but fettered spirit. One part of his ministry, however, and that the most important of his Fisherwick days—his pastoral work—never suffered by reason of his own weakness in the flesh. To the last days of his life the visitation of the sick and sorrowing, and the ordinary pastoral visitation of the congregation, proceeded with the same regularity and devotion as ever. It was a very small portion of the ministry to the sick and bereaved that he ever delegated to his assistants; he knew it to be the chief part of his work in Fisherwick —as time and personal testimonies have proved it to have been,—and to the last, even when fighting the shadow of death, he carried it through as thoroughly and devotedly as though his health were all he could wish.

In 1914 came the Great War, that time of unparalleled strain for multitudes of lives, and in its shadow the ordinary pastoral duties became very much heavier and more trying; the needs of wounded hearts for the ministry of sympathy and comfort grew more urgent as the days passed, and to this weightier burden of pastoral cares

was soon to be added the strain of a great personal sorrow; but these things belong rather to the last chapter of the history of his life, and I shall carry that history no further for the present than the first two years of the war, as I wish to turn for a few moments at this point to an estimate of his work in Fisherwick, and to such reminiscences of that work as have come to us from members of his congregation during those days. Mr. Davey's work in Fisherwick was less spectacular than his work in St. Enoch's; it was for the most part the regular routine of the work of preacher and pastor; but I personally have never been able to believe that it was less important or valuable than his earlier ministry in its fruits of eternal moment. In St. Enoch's Mr. Davey was pre-eminently the evangelist, and that work was immense and of permanent consequence; in Fisherwick he came to a congregation where the work of evangelism had been well and faithfully done by his predecessor, and the ministry chiefly called for was that of the upbuilding of the congregation in the graces of the Spirit. His vocation was here to be that of pastor rather than evangelist, and the records of his ministry testify unanimously to the exceptional power of his pastoral work. His great power as evangelist was still his; and his work in the pulpit yet bore its fruit in lives changed and devotion deepened; but the testimonies which have come to us from this period dwell even more upon the influence which he exercised in his work of visitation, both of the whole and of the sick. The present writer, himself one of the fruits of Dr. Davey's evangelistic ministry as continued in Fisherwick, has heard enough, by way of personal testimony, of lives turned to God and empowered for His service, to doubt the reality of that side of the work, but it did not stand

out so uniquely as in the days at St. Enoch's. Many conversions are definitely recorded as belonging to these years, but their number is quite indefinite, and one must remember that Dr. Davey himself kept no records of such things. But the blessing of God was still upon his preaching, perhaps even as mightily as in St. Enoch's, if we had but the means of knowing. We do know of many a family in which not only one, but two or three members, were led by his words to make the great decision. If the work in St. Enoch's was chiefly among the young men, that in Fisherwick is perhaps even more notable in our records for the winning of souls among the young women or the girls at school. That we cannot give any idea of how many scores of lives were changed by this pulpit ministry is of no consequence; what we rejoice to know is that in his ministry the touch of God had still its ancient power. But when that has been said, there is something still greater to add regarding his work in Fisherwick; and that is, that it was in the work of pastor, in personal contact with individuals, that his greatest and most abiding service of God was done in his last congregation. The passing of the great crowds mattered nothing in the eternal reckoning, as it mattered nothing in the ministry of Jesus Christ Himself. One thing is sure, that the closer a man draws to God the greater becomes his power for good; and Dr. Davey's life was a gradual ascent along every line of life to the one God whose he was and whom he served, until the day when he was not, for God had taken him. His growth in grace was written upon his face, which became stronger, tenderer, and nobler with the years. A friend who had not seen him for years happened to spend an evening in our home a few days before Dr. Davey died, and on his

return home that night he said to his mother: "I do not think I ever saw a nobler face than Dr. Davey's." It was the mirror of a great soul grown greater with the passing of the years. We may well believe that, by the trying of his faith in weakness, and by his growth in Christian character, he was being fitted for a grander work beyond this life than he had ever done upon this earth :—

> "So many worlds, so much to do,
> So little done, such things to be ;
> How know I what had need of thee?"

—we may well believe that, and yet I think we have reason for believing that the growth of his soul strengthened and deepened his work here also. If it was not more extensive, it was more intensive, in these later days. The love which he awakened in his people, and which followed him beyond the grave, was peculiarly rich and enduring ; and it was in personal contact that it was born. The facts of his influence and of the Christian fragrance of his presence, come back to us as a refrain from all quarters, and were proverbial outside his congregation. I have heard other ministers speak of his unique reputation for being "a good visitor" ; and it was in this pastoral ministry of the cure of souls that his greatest work in Fisherwick was done. And perhaps there was no part of his ministry which was so great and so rich in its fruit for eternity as his visitation of the sick. I shall speak below in more detail of this and other aspects of his work in Fisherwick ; here I am chiefly concerned to show how his pastoral work predominated in these days, and how, as the boundaries of his work were circumscribed by physical weakness, the work itself grew richer and deeper in its spiritual content.

His presence, his prayers, his words, his hand-clasp, his voice, his smile, were as the touch and benediction of God as he moved among the people. As his own faith leaned harder upon the unseen in the days of trial by sickness and sorrow, the torch of testimony which he carried burned the brighter, and floodgates of spiritual power were opened in personal contact of which his earlier ministry, for all its blessing, knew little. He was, to put the matter briefly, a greater man at life's close than at its noon; and the blessing of God, which he had won in the wrestling at his own Jabbok, could not but glorify the work which had been given him to do in these later years. The glory of the midday must, after all, yield in beauty to the softer and richer, if less vehement, glory of the sunset; and the grace of his sunset ministry in Fisherwick congregation was something which stands, and will stand, by itself, in the memories of those whom it touched.

There were differences between the Fisherwick congregation and his former charges, differences in particular in the external things of this world. His final congregation was one better endowed with wealth, and the things for which wealth stands, such as education and influence. Dr. Davey never valued class distinctions or the marks of external well-being, but he could not be blind to the fact that a congregation with a large percentage of its membership belonging to the university and merchant strata of the social organism, offered an exceptional opportunity for a far-reaching influence upon society at large; it called for quality in his work as never before, for personal contact even more than the addressing of assemblies. The pastoral emphasis of his work at Fisherwick was thus the natural outcome of

the human material with which he was here dealing, more reserved, more critical, more individualized, and more potent in personal influence owing to its social setting. His own limitations in the flesh helped actually to make his work here what it needed to be, and that work has left its permanent impress upon the community which it touched for all that is strong and true and worthy. The parable of the leaven is the picture of the Fisherwick ministry; the grace of a holy character was the leaven, and it did its work quietly but very surely.

The evangelistic vocation of the former days was not, however, forgotten in this more personal work. The evening service, for most of his years in Fisherwick, remained, as before, a service of evangelistic aim and spirit. And apart from the ordinary preaching of his pastorate, several special missions were held—three or four for adults and a couple for children—by outside Christian workers brought in for the purpose. In every case Mr. Davey followed up the work then done with special evangelistic appeals of his own; and I can remember well the conviction of years ago, that his own sermons were often far more impressive and far more searching than those which they followed—the power of God was still upon his lips. Nor was his evangelistic activity confined to his own pastorate and to his direction for the years already mentioned of the Assembly's evangelistic work; he sometimes would go from home to conduct such services in other parts of the country. One minister has written us from a long distance that "the memory of his last mission among us is still fragrant, and its influence still remains. I regard it as one of the things which have made my own ministry here so happy and successful." But with the progress of ill-health such

work had to be gradually dropped except at home,—and at home, of necessity, greatly reduced. But the combination of the evangelist and pastor in his ministry was true of him to the end, even though the emphasis had for many reasons shifted towards the pastoral aspect.

He used to write personal letters to the young people of the congregation who were growing up, and who, he felt, were of an age to come to the Lord's Table; and by means of these letters he had many a heart-to-heart talk with the young members of his congregation. The number of these young men and women, many of them school-girls, who were led to the feet of the Eternal by such talks, or by the power of his pulpit ministry, was very large, and has its permanent record in lives devoted to Christian service in our Church itself, in other churches or communities of these islands, or in lands beyond the sea. To his ministry in Fisherwick belongs his adoption of the children's sermon and children's hymn as integral parts of the morning service. The step had been taken elsewhere, and it had commended itself to his judgment; but he was for long diffident about attempting what he feared he would do badly. He was not sure that he had the gift of speaking to children. However, he set to, and by doing it he learned to do it well; his sympathy, for all his inexperience, let him quickly into the secret of the child's mind, and in his later years at Fisherwick his children's addresses were very apt and telling. Like all his sermons, they were both memorable in their form and practical in their purpose and outcome. A little girl of six, listening to a chidren's sermon about a fortnight before his death, in which he had said, "Just where you sit, tell Him you love Him and want to please Him," squeezed her father's arm a few moments later and said,

"Daddy, I have told Jesus." He had discovered the art, so difficult to learn, of putting things to a child in a language which can be understood by a child. The illustrations of his children's sermons in particular were not only to the point, but were told so well and so dramatically that they found a ready entrance into the mind as finger-posts to the great truths; and I think it is true to say that adults, no less than children, found his addresses to the young of great spiritual value.

His influence with children was what one would expect in the case of a personality so unaffected, so sympathetic, and so sane. Both boys and girls felt the attraction of a soul that cared for them and whom they could trust implicitly, as surely as unreality and malice had no place in his heart. One father brought his little boy to him one day and said with a laugh, "This is the boy that would rather have you than me. I asked him which of us he preferred, and he was quite candid about the matter." It is only one instance out of many of the impression he made upon the unsophisticated and clear-sighted child mind.

I should like to illustrate this somewhat bare record of his Fisherwick ministry by some personal testimonies which have come to us regarding the power and influence of his pastoral work; the evangelistic side of his ministry has received more adequate attention in former chapters, and I shall not dwell upon it further in this. The instances I shall quote are but samples of his work in these years which might be multiplied a hundredfold or more if only we had the knowledge hidden in many hearts and the space to devote to it. A young and successful minister of our Church writes in reference to Dr. Davey's earlier years in Fisherwick: "I owe him

more than I can express in words. When I started my ministry he was the ideal I had before me; and all through the intervening years his friendship has been one of my most precious treasures and one of the most sacred influences of my life." "In his prayers," writes a friend, "one felt in the very presence of God"; and this which was true so often of his prayers in public worship, was more abundantly and powerfully true of his prayers in private as he visited from house to house, particularly his prayers with and for the sick and afflicted. The definiteness of his prayers was one of the most remarkable features of his visitation, and this definiteness in petition seems to have had a great power for strengthening and encouraging those who were feeling their weakness and unbelief. Vague general petitions never had much place in his prayers, public or private; he believed in the real value and efficacy of prayer because he believed in a Father who desired that His children should ask in faith, nothing doubting; and his belief in vital prayer of this kind led him to ask for the things actually needed at the moment with a precision which almost took away the breath of those who listened, as they themselves have told us, but which gave tremendous confidence and help to those who needed such petitions as the expression of their own felt needs, and who, for some reason, were unable to put these needs into words.

In one of his addresses there is left us a written reference to the need for direct and concrete petitions in our approach to God, in which he says, "We must be prayerful in everything. There must be definite prayer, definite requests for particular persons and particular things—we lose ourselves often in generalities. Don't be afraid to mention names before the Lord."

The definiteness of his prayers was but an aspect of his living faith which took God ever at His word, and committed all things to Him without a doubt of His interest even in the smallest details of His children's lives.

He carried with him the atmosphere of the unseen in which he trusted. On one occasion he was asked to visit a dying man, so he called and prayed with him. The man afterwards said to a friend, "Of all the ministers who have called to see me he is the only one who really helped me. I was nervous and afraid when he came, and he saw it; and as he knelt to pray he put his hand on mine and held it. Somehow his grip steadied me and gave me a confidence I have not lost since." As so often, virtue had gone out of him; faith had kindled faith. He afterwards visited the same man in hospital just before his death, and before praying with him he spoke some words to the man lying in the next bed, and also in his prayer included the stranger. When he had gone, the second man drew a long breath and said to the other, "Wasn't that heavenly!" He had a unique power of making almost palpable the realities of which he spoke and of shedding abroad the atmosphere of peace and trust. Another friend writes: "When visiting one of his members, who was very weak and ill, in a nursing-home, he prayed beside her bed; and while her heart burned within her with the beauty and comprehensiveness of his prayer, she said to him, 'Oh if I could only have faith!' Without hesitation he said, 'Just remember you don't need to trouble about your faith, for we'll all have it for you. The Father understands all about it; we don't even need to explain it to Him!' To her last conscious day that comfort gave her peace, and I shall thank God for Dr. Davey while I live." He

understood the doubts born of physical weakness, and knew that God understood also.

A story in which we can see his kindly humour and his knowledge of human nature is that of an old lady bedridden for many years, who, on the occasion of his weekly visit, asked him one day to pray that her life might not be prolonged. His eyes twinkled, as he said, "Do you think you could tell me just when you would like to die, and we could be quite definite about it? Could we fix on to-night?—or to-morrow morning?—or when?" Somehow she could not fix on a time, so he asked her just to let him know when she did. He cured her at any rate that morning of the notion that she was the best judge of such matters, and she was thereafter more ready to leave the day of her summons in wiser hands.

He believed in caring for other than spiritual interests in those visited when the law of love pointed the way. A working-man's wife said recently to a friend: "Mr. Davey called when my husband was out of work, and we were in a bad way; he gave me £1, and in a week or so he had found a job for my husband." It is only typical of hundreds of such cases all through his life. The money which he gave away, apart from ordinary charities, and often to those who had no intention of repaying it, must have run into many hundreds of pounds. He used to say with a laugh that he would be able to retire comfortably any day if he could recover such gifts to men out of work or in tight places. I have known him give £10, £20, or £30 at a time, quite unconditionally, to men who were in some special need; he preferred always to err on the side of generosity, which same is the side of faith.

Lonely hearts drew from him a sympathy which was practical, and, where needed, concrete in helpfulness. He was a father to many outside his own family. One girl whose father died when she was very young, and who was always in delicate health, said of him: "I never felt the want of a father, for Dr. Davey was a father to me. He used to put his hand on my shoulder and ask 'Do you need anything?' and if I said 'No,' he would say, 'Well, just tell me when you do.'"

The love which he awakened throughout the length and breadth of his congregation was a by-word among his assistants and, indeed, throughout the country, and it rested upon the love which he gave forth. One lady of his congregation writes: "He was a living epitome of 1 Corinthians xiii., an epitome of that perfect charity which never faileth." Another writes of the note of victory which his life seemed to sound forth, and says further: "It was his gentleness which made him great, and he has left behind him a treasure-house of beautiful memories." Another says: "If ever a man preached Jesus Christ by his life, Dr. Davey did; his was a grand life grandly ended."

Mr. Davey believed in the primary value of the personal touch. To one Sabbath-school superintendent, with reference to a shortage of teachers, he once wrote: "Do not put two classes into one if you can possibly avoid it." Two classes in one meant a comparative loss of personal attention. Another Sabbath-school superintendent records the proved wisdom of the advice he received from Mr. Davey upon beginning his office: "Keep in the saddle."

As at St. Enoch's, so in Fisherwick, he took a keen interest in the Christian Endeavour Society, and prac-

tically every Sunday's work was ended in the midst of the young people who had banded themselves together for Christian service. At St. Enoch's there was no more living organisation in the congregation, and in Fisherwick too it was the training-ground of many for wider Christian service.

Not a few very warm references have been received to the glimpses of home life which were caught by one and another calling to see him and finding him in the family circle; for at home he was ever at his best in every quality of head and heart,—gentle, tender, strong, humorous, alert, and wise. His personality, so complete, so balanced, so well-rounded, shone nowhere so well. Upon his more public work I need not dwell at length here, but a few references are worthy of notice. One friend writes: "I shall never forget my first impression of the man as I saw and heard him in the pulpit; it was that of a messenger from the unseen world with a live, awful declaration direct from God to men. His appeal was almost terrible, yet so kind and sympathetic." His sermons, too, were of such a character that they stayed in the memory of those who heard them as clear and practical guidance for a work-a-day world. A friend writing from a far-off part of the earth says: "I shall never forget the uplift it was to hear him preach, and his sermon in particular, 'Tried by fire,' stays with me in its constant helpfulness." Another says: "I heard him preach on 'His bow abode in strength, and the arms of his hands were made strong by the hands of the mighty God of Jacob.' One illustration in particular gave me great help, and during the week I thanked him for it, telling him how it had enabled me to come safely through some very trying experiences. He said to me, and I

have never forgotten the words, 'I am glad to know it, for I have come to that time when nothing else matters but to help others along.'"

His conduct of the communion service in particular, and his addresses at the "Table"—addresses throbbing with a consecration of purpose and an assurance of the unseen, which were unique in their power and inspiration—are often referred to as times of unwonted contact with spiritual forces and realities, made almost visible and tangible by the faith of the speaker. A friend sends us this memory: "After one communion in Fisherwick, a man who is not easily moved and very reticent said to me, 'I never felt so near heaven in my life as at that service.'" Through his words at such times the spell of the very presence of God lay upon the people with a strange and memorable power.

One of the most frequently mentioned of his sermons in Fisherwick was upon the question of our Lord, "What do ye more than others?" Often have we heard of the practical help which it gave to one and another in their conflict for Christian character, by enabling them to overcome their besetting sins or faults of daily life. The passages which I shall now quote from it, as characteristic of his preaching, will illustrate the practical quality of his sermons. More, he says (to summarize the earlier pages), is expected of Christians than others—God expects it, society expects it, and history warrants the expectation. But why should more be expected? Because they have a better knowledge of God, a better example in Christ, and a better Spirit within them. I quote at this point. "We have in us another and a better Spirit than others; we are not working on merely human resources. Do not emphasise the word 'do' unduly in my text. In

the next verse Jesus says, 'Be ye perfect as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' We must *be* before we can *do*, and we must be more than others before we can do more. And the Christian *is* more than others, has more and higher life than others. He is a man *plus* the Spirit of the living God. And if Jesus could say that John the Baptist, the greatest among those that were born of women, was less than the least in the kingdom of heaven, it is surely still true that anyone who has a place in the kingdom of heaven has likewise a superior type of life, a greater power than one who has no place in that kingdom. The reason of reasons why you are to live a higher life and leave a lasting impress for good upon the society in which you move, is that the Spirit of God dwells in you, and ye are partakers of the divine nature, for ye are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if so be the Spirit of God dwell in you.

"Now, I wish to apply this question of my text to a few of the practical matters of everyday life. Take, for example, the matter of the forgiveness of injuries. How do you get along there? Do you find it an easy thing to forgive, or the opposite? There is no doubt whatever that you have disagreeable people to deal with—I grant you that. But when they have wronged you, and metaphorically smitten you on the one cheek, can you forgive them? I do not ask if you literally turn to them the other; Christ never meant it in that literal sense. He assumed that His people would have sense, and in this respect at least they have justified His expectation! But what about the actual question of forgiving your enemy? Will you say, 'When he comes and humbles himself, and asks it, I can forgive him and will, but not till then'? You mean that, when you get your

foot on his neck, and feel complacent at the thought that you have conquered him, then you could forgive. You don't need Christianity to help you to do that. If you have only got that length, what do ye more than others? It may suit your convenience to think that that is all which is required of you, but it is not Christianity. You must learn somehow to love your enemies, to do good to them that hate you, and to forgive those who have trespassed against you, if you would be the children of your Father which is in heaven. No one has treated you so badly as the enemies of Christ treated Him, yet He prayed with His dying breath the prayer, 'Father, forgive them.' And if, in opposition to both the precept and the example of Jesus, you persist in your doctrine of eye for eye and tooth for tooth, know ye that such hearts as yours never knew the grace of God; and, except you repent, you must be thrust out into the darkness, though you say 'Lord, Lord,' every hour of the day.

"What, again, about your attitude toward those around you—are you more considerate and gentle than others? I know that there is a difference in us as we come into this world—some are naturally more gentle and less selfish than others—and that such teaching will come much easier to the man or woman of gentle heart and benevolent disposition than to others. But for what purpose, I should like to add, do we embrace Christianity if not for the purpose of rooting out our faults and sins? If you are naturally selfish, given to think of yourself and your own little circle, making yourself the centre and expecting everyone to revolve round you and do what you tell them respectfully, without any consideration for their feelings, what do ye more than others? Anyone could do that. Here is a whole gospel written

for yourself, to tell you of One who was rich and yet became poor for the sake of others, who gave His life for others, called Himself the servant of all, and washed the feet of His disciples. Are any of you proud and arrogant, thinking yourselves better than others, and forgetting the very principles that underlie our Christianity? Your Master stood by a country well, and asked a poor woman from the city, who was a sinner, for a drop of water, and when she refused Him, He only said in effect, 'I would have been kinder to you if you had asked something of Me,' and talked to her so gently that He won her over, and gave her of the water of life.

"I must say again that some of us, in bringing our souls into anything like Christian shape, have more to contend with than others, but sometimes we make far too much of our difficulties. You say 'I said the wrong or unkind thing of which you speak, but then I was in a temper when I said it, and I have an awful temper.' Well, if you have, that is just the spot where Christianity must fight its battle in you. That temper can be overcome, and must. What do ye more than others? Where is your superior life, your better Spirit? On what principle of religion, for example, would you ask the drunkard to give up his glass, and allow his wife to keep her hot temper or her sharp tongue? Christianity, when it comes in, must sweep them both away, or where is its power? Servants of Christ, you must be more than others. Your Saviour expects it, demands it of you. You must do more than others, because you are surrounded on every hand by those who do less than they should, and you must do more to meet that deficiency. The only way to bring your life up to the true level of Christian duty is to lay hold of the Spirit of Christ in greater

abundance and power. Seek this, and the work will be easier than you think."

It may be added that Dr. Davey heard definitely of three distinct cases of men and women who went forth after listening to the sermon just quoted, and made up quarrels of long standing, as a direct and practical outcome of the message they had just received by the lips of the preacher. Another case was that of a boy who was in the habit of giving way to fits of temper, and whose parents were greatly concerned about it in relation to his future. After hearing this sermon, he ran upstairs, knelt by his bedside, and asked God to take away his violent temper, so that he might not vex his mother: and from that day he was never again known to transgress in this respect.

In his earlier years, Dr. Davey's great inspiration was the Cross of Christ, with its messages of peace and love; in his later years, he was filled more and more with the thought of the Resurrection of Christ, with its messages of power and victory, and of a personal living communion, for all His disciples, with Him who had been manifested in the flesh for our salvation, and had risen to be the Guide and Strength of His people for evermore. The faith which had been found in pardon had gone from strength to strength till it ended in the triumph and power of an endless life; and this message which had come to him he sought continually to pass on to others.

The warmth of his spirit lent grace and beauty to all his pastoral duties, however commonplace and however burdensome. When he was married, his great friend, R. M. Irvine, mentioned earlier, wrote to his wife that he would need to be carefully looked after, for he was "more soul than body"; and these words were realised to the full in the story of his life in their impli-

cations both of spiritual power and of physical limitations. His spirit chafed all through his life against the fetters of flesh which, in the dispositions of a Providence in part at least inscrutable, were the conditions of his ministry upon this earth. The warmth of his spirit drew out the warmth of other hearts as love replied to love. One former member writes: "I often think of dear Dr. Davey as the only minister I ever loved, and I have often felt the sound of his voice to be an inspiration in itself." Sympathetic to the core of his being, he entered fully into the feelings of the friends among whom his work was appointed. He never spared himself, and when trouble came he was always there. One friend has written: "We have lost in his death not only the best pastor I ever knew, but a very dear and trusted friend. In sickness and trouble he was ever near, and seemed to watch over us till the storm had passed." Another wrote: "I do not know anyone who got to the hearts of all his many friends so much as he. His sympathy and kindness, especially in times of trouble, were unspeakable. The grip of his hand was more than many another man's expression of sympathy." Yet another said some years ago: "You never know Mr. Davey till you have trouble or sickness; then you find out what he is."

Such testimonies are only a few out of many illustrations of the quality of the man's work and of the place he won in the hearts of his people.

It was a great ministry of soul to souls, but the tabernacle of this flesh was too frail for its long continuance; and we must turn at length to the story of the last years and the opening of that portal which we call death, that gateway of our God that leads but to a larger life and service beyond our present ken.

CHAPTER VIII

THE END OF THE DAY

And the golden gates swing open, and the angels whisper "Come"
To a weary-laden spirit who has earned a welcome home ;
And I see the radiant pathway where the angel feet have trod,
And I look and fain would follow where that pathway leads to God.

THE years of the Great War were a period of unexampled strain for all classes of the community, but for none more than the ministers of the Christian Church, who were called upon, not only to keep alive the flame of faith in doubting souls, but to expend themselves as never before in the trying duties of the ministry of comfort to wounded or broken hearts. It was in July 1916 that the first great wave of sorrow struck the North of Ireland ; and from that time onward there was no cessation in the surges of that terrible sea, nor in the added work of ministration which it called for. The first break in Dr. Davey's own happy family circle came with the loss of his dearly-loved third son, Willie, who, like many others, never was heard of again after he went "over the top" at Gueudecourt, in France, on 7th October, 1916, where two divisions were almost wiped out before the position was taken from the Germans. It was a hard blow to Dr. Davey and to all the family, for their lost

one was such a gentle, self-effacing soul, but they did not sorrow as those without hope. There was no need that the boy should tell his father, as he did just before leaving for France in August 1916, that he was ready for anything that might happen; his everyday life declared it to all who knew him. "If we weep, it is not that we would call him back, but that it is a need of our nature to regret the beloved made invisible." Many another parent was his father able to help in especial measure just because he himself had passed that way.

It is strange to observe how the bitter and the sweet are mingled in our cup. The March previous had been a time of great joy to Dr. Davey in the fortunes of his two eldest sons. The first reached the climax of his scholastic career in being awarded a Fellowship in King's College, Cambridge, on 17th March, and the very same day the second boy received the news that he had passed the final examination for his medical degree. In the successes of his children, and indeed in all their affairs, Dr. Davey took the keenest interest, and found an unalloyed pleasure. He used often to say, in his own humorous way, how glad he was that he had got into that family!

In April 1917 he was made a recipient of the honorary degree of D.D. at the hands of the Theological Faculty of our Church. The honour was a recognition of his long and useful ministry and his public services; and his many friends rejoiced with him in that recognition. One of them, a brother minister, wrote: "I wish to congratulate you heartily on your D.D. If such honour is ever merited by the high quality and faithfulness of ministerial work, then you have doubly earned the distinction. In your early public life you had more

popularity of a high character than most ministers, and what can be more gratifying to a man, especially to a minister of the Gospel of Christ, amid the difficulties, misunderstandings, disappointments, and trials of life, than to have the assurance that the years which have moved him to a higher and more conspicuous place have also kept ever widening and deepening the respect, and affection, and veneration of the best thought and character of the communities in which he had lived, moved, and fulfilled his ministry. And I know no man who can have the unspeakable gratification of that assurance in the same degree as my very dearly-beloved and much-valued friend Charles Davey, D.D."

The following appeared in the "Missionary Herald" at that time: "The honour conferred on Dr. Davey will be confirmed by the judgment of the Church, throughout whose bounds his high character and attainments are fully recognised. His pastoral activities have been characterised by the strengthening grace of sympathy; and his success has been due in no small degree to his unremitting shepherding of the flock. In the pulpit, he stands, Sabbath by Sabbath, as a man with a message—a message which he has received, which he has passed through the crucible of his experience: and that message is Christ. 'If the passion of Rutherford's life was to see for himself the King in His beauty, the passion of his ministry was to make this vision apparent to others.' Such a description might fittingly be applied to Dr. Davey's life and ministry. His preaching is steeped in the love, forgiveness, and inspiration of the Cross, and his success has proved that it is for such an old-fashioned Evangel, applied to the most modern problems and conditions of life, that the hearts of men are still hungering.

Modest, retiring, faithful, he is worthy of the honour and esteem of the Church."

The long years of the war told upon him greatly; and we must remember how small, for years, had been the margin of his strength. The anxiety which was natural in regard to his three sons serving in the army (two of them were in France, and the other was on a hospital ship as doctor for a year and a half, and later in India till the war ended), left its permanent impress. Nothing but his great faith could have carried through those days a man whose strength had been so worn down by years of strain; but that faith sufficed to carry him through the days until the Armistice had become a fact of history of some four months' standing. And it is a fact worthy of mention in this connection, that the illness which carried him off at last bore little or no direct relation to the long-standing struggle of years against nervous exhaustion; no doubt it had a real relation indirectly, but, none the less, it is a fact that his death was not the result of a recrudescence of his former troubles of 1897, 1905, and 1911. Added to the strain of his own fatherly anxieties during these difficult years was the strain of a pastoral ministry, in the fulfilment of which the times made exceptional demands; and the sympathy he gave was never histrionic, but the genuine outpouring of a heart large enough for all the concerns of those among whom had been appointed his cure of souls.

For years—indeed, ever since his enforced trip to Australia—he had been far from robust; but his indomitable spirit kept him up, and his health seemed actually to have improved steadily for years—though slowly—when he developed a bronchial condition which had

often threatened him, and which now appeared in the distressing form of bronchial asthma. Just before Christmas 1917 he had the first attack; it was short and sharp. In the following February he had two very alarming attacks, one of which, lasting three or four hours, brought him so near to the valley of the shadow that he began to have a nervous dread of such turns or of any protracted period of loneliness. The attacks however appeared to pass, and for over six months he had no further encounter with them. But in the end of January 1919 he had a lengthy and weakening attack of the prevalent influenza, which left him very limp. He went to Rostrevor to recruit, and before he returned home he had another severe attack of the bronchial asthma. From that time he never shook it off. He returned from Rostrevor quite unfit for work, but he would not rest; he continued with his work as before, visiting, preaching, and the like. On 23rd March, after a further enforced stay in bed, he took the morning service in Fisherwick, preaching from the text Psalm cxxxix. 17—"How precious are Thy thoughts unto me! how great is the sum of them! When I awake, I am still with Thee." It was the last time he ever stood in the pulpit, and the end was very near. He seemed to some that day to be very vigorous, especially during his address to the children; but on the way home he said he had felt so weak that he scarcely knew how to get through the service. Nevertheless, after dinner he went out and paid a sick call, and then returned home and went to bed. During his last week, indeed, it seemed as if he specially wished to visit all who were sick or in trouble; and he pushed himself through all the labour of such visitation without a murmur. But, owing to his

frequent attacks, he got little sleep at night, and his system was wearing rapidly to breaking-point. From the time of his attack in Rostrevor it must have been borne in on his mind that he might go suddenly; and, although he never spoke of death, he lived as if each day might be his last. During the last ten days, on three occasions, when asked to do something in the near future, he said to the friends who asked, "Things are so uncertain with me that I cannot promise"; he had a premonition that the end was not far, and for that end he was abundantly ready. Each night he had one or more turns of asthma, and the want of sleep, added to the strain of the attacks themselves, so weakened him, that he allowed himself to be persuaded to spend Tuesday in bed. He kept wonderfully well all day, and saw several visitors; but shortly after 11 o'clock that night he had a bad turn. It passed, but about midnight came a second, which was the last; for at about 12-15 a.m. his heart gave way under the strain, and the door of the unseen swung open to admit another of the saints into the better country. His wife had gone out of the room just before his second attack, but, feeling somehow uneasy, she came back immediately to find him in the midst of the worst turn he had ever had. Every remedy was tried, but without avail. When the last spasm came, she helped to steady him that he might take some stimulant which the crisis called for; but the medicine never passed his lips, for in that moment he was gone. So he died in his wife's arms shortly after midnight on Wednesday, 26th March, 1919.

His sudden passing away, in the midst of his work and without the sadness of farewell, was surely as he would have wished it; and it had about it something

peculiarly fitting and beautiful, though to those who loved him it was a staggering blow, and left behind it a terrible blank, not only within his home but outside it. "What a glorious and perfect ending our beloved pastor had to his beautiful Christ-like life," wrote one of his friends. "He is not dead but translated, and has carried with him his freight of life, and love, and purpose, to continue all things there in an uninterrupted course. But we feel lonely without him." Another wrote to his widow: "Few families have been left such a heritage in the death of the head of the house. Think of the long happy loan you had of him rather than of the sudden eclipse of your sunny married life." Indeed, his married life was one of exceptional happiness, undimmed in all its thirty years by any shadow of a cloud. One of his sons, writing to congratulate him on the thirtieth anniversary of his wedding-day, said—in a letter which arrived just a week after his father had been called from the seen to the unseen—"I have never come across any married couple who have had such a happy life, and I only hope when I am married I may be as happy as you two have been." To many, even far beyond his own family circle, his married life stood for the ideal of what such a union may be in human experience; it was a partnership of kindred souls in the work of the Kingdom of God, a union of two lives in love and mutual helpfulness as they two moved together up life's stairway of time, and trial, and opportunity. And now the blessed communion of years was shattered, until God should knit it together once more in His own time. "A rare man," as one of his best friends called him, had passed from our midst to the refreshment, the fellowship, and the service of the Father's house. Some words in the cata-

combs of Rome express for us very simply what we feel as we dwell on all he was: "The simple avowal of grateful hearts for one who sleeps, for whom thanks be to the Lord and to Christ. We praise Thee for the years of good Thou hast given us, and we leave him to Thy divine Fatherhood."

His sudden passing was a great shock to all his friends, and especially to the members of his congregation. On Friday, 28th March, a short service was conducted in his home, 17, Wellington Park, by Rev. Dr. A. J. Wilson and Rev. R. W. Hamilton, after which his remains were conveyed to Fisherwick Church, where a solemn and impressive service was held in the presence of a great congregation, who gave evident token of the depth and sincerity of their grief. The account of that service given in the *Belfast Telegraph* we will quote in part, as follows: "No more striking or heartfelt tribute to the life-work of any man could be paid than that which the huge congregation assembled in Fisherwick Church to-day tendered to the memory of the late Rev. Charles Davey, D.D., minister of that church, who died with startling suddenness on Wednesday. It not only represented a tribute from the members of the church amongst whom he laboured so long and so faithfully, and by whom he was so well beloved, but it was indicative of the place Dr. Davey had won for himself in the esteem and admiration of all sections of the community in general; and the presence of many prominent dignitaries of other denominations, and of large numbers of leading Belfast citizens, was convincing proof that he had not indeed laboured in vain. The eyes dimmed by tears, the heaving shoulders of those who loved him so well, with whose joys he had always been ready to sympa-

thise, and into whose sorrows he had always endeavoured to bring some ray of comfort, was more eloquent testimony to the success which crowned his labour than any panegyric the human brain could conceive. Truly, a man whose passing calls forth such emotions deserves to be called 'great.'

"The Moderator of the General Assembly (the Right Rev. Dr. M'Granahan), at the close of the second hymn, mounted the pulpit and paid a tribute to the late minister, the eloquent simplicity of which moved many of his hearers to tears. In the course of his address, the Moderator said their heads that day were bowed in grief, not for the friend who had gone a little way ahead of them, but for themselves, in that they were the poorer, because he no longer could strengthen them with his presence and enrich them with his wisdom. They did not, however, sorrow as the hopeless, for they believed God had nothing but purposes of love concerning His children.

"It would be a poor tribute to the innate modesty, the natural reserve, the sincere humility of Dr. Charles Davey were he to attempt to give an estimate of his worth. He was too close a follower of the humble, lowly, gentle Jesus ever to stop on the journey to consider what he was worth as a disciple. They could bear him out when he said that no preacher of the Gospel could so effectually hide himself behind the Cross as this man of God, who found his true life-work in proclaiming the unsearchable riches of Christ.

"There were two books Dr. Davey never closed—the Bible and human nature. In the one he found the only remedy for the ills of the other. One had told him how, in recent years, there had been an added note of

comfort in nearly all his sermons. They sometimes had to await the apocalypse of death ere they fully knew a man, but Dr. Davey in his life was known, esteemed, and loved; and his death only gave added emphasis to the beauty of his character and the devotion with which he gave himself to his work. He lives in the hearts of many in this and other lands whom he led to the Cross. He laid up treasure in heaven, for he turned many to righteousness, and they are there to welcome him who had first set their feet Zionward. Last Sabbath he occupied the pulpit; ere another came he had passed from the ranks of the visible ministry to the invisible temple whose gates are never shut, for there is no night there. The sorrow that exists in that darkened home from which he has passed is too tender for us to touch; but they who dwell in it, and whose hearts are pierced, may rest assured of a sympathy as general as it is sincere."

Outside the church, after the service, the large cortège formed up, one almost unique in the number who came to pay the last tribute of love or respect, and, preceded by a detachment of the Boys' Brigade, made its way to the City Cemetery, where Rev. John Pollock and Rev. Samuel Lindsay conducted the service; and many beautiful wreaths of remembrance from the Session and Committee of Fisherwick Church, the Women's Working Association, the Boys' Brigade, the Christian Endeavour Society, and others were placed upon the grave before the mourners at length withdrew from the place of their sorrowful pilgrimage.

The following Lord's Day Dr. Park preached at the morning service in Fisherwick, and paid his eloquent tribute to the memory of him who had passed away;

and at the evening service Dr. Montgomery, one of Dr. Davey's oldest friends, occupied the pulpit, and added his testimony of appreciation to the ministry which had so suddenly been closed by the hand of God. Preaching in St. Enoch's Church, Rev. John Pollock, his successor in that pastoral charge, said, in referring to Dr. Davey's death as one which touched them closely owing to the associations of the past, "Charles Davey's most outstanding characteristic was his attractiveness. I have seldom known, either among men or women, a more winsome personality. Those who were in sorrow welcomed him as an angel of God. The warm grasp of his big hand, the sympathetic gaze of those soft eyes of his, went to the heart and opened it to the man himself. One thing which I always specially admired in him was his naturalness. He had no tones which he reserved for the pulpit. There was a quality in his voice which made it impossible to mistake it on the 'phone for the voice of any other, and, doubtless, it was no small part of his power as a preacher with men. He was an able expositor, but his *forte* lay in appeal. He was, indeed, a 'son of exhortation'; yet no greater injustice could be done to his memory than to imagine that this was the whole of his preaching. Those who sat under his ministry testify to the value of his teaching; and he was the best of pastors, the friend of the individual. In season and out of season he was the helper, counsellor, and intimate of those whose high privilege it was to have him as their minister."

The following Sabbath the pulpit of Fisherwick was occupied by Rev. W. J. P. Waddell, Dr. Davey's ministerial assistant during the last year and a half of his pastorate. Mr. Waddell took as his text "Enoch

walked with God, and he was not, for God took him"; and in the course of his sermon he said, "I would not lightly use these great words to describe any man, but, after eighteen months of service and fellowship with the revered and beloved minister of this congregation, I can find no other words that suit so well my impression of his life. We may truly say 'Dr. Davey walked with God.' Now he is dead, they say, after all his years of devotion, of prayer, of manifold activity: dead! Rather let us, as we move about in the service of the place and people he loved, say 'He is not, for God has taken him.'"

At the April meeting of the Belfast Presbytery Dr. Davey's death was reported, and the following resolution placed upon the records of the Presbytery, a copy being sent to Mrs. Davey: "The Presbytery has learned with the deepest sorrow of the death of their honoured and beloved brother, Rev. Dr. Charles Davey. Like Daniel, he was a man greatly beloved, and, like him too, he early saw the vision which in his case made him an able minister of the New Testament. The earlier years of his devoted and fruitful ministry were given to evangelistic service all over and far beyond this northern province. He is lovingly remembered as one who, through the Divine Spirit, became the messenger of Life to large numbers of our people. Whole districts of the country were mightily moved through the tender, telling addresses of the young evangelist. These addresses were the outcome of careful thinking and earnest prayer.

"The ministerial career of our departed brother showed him to be the same consecrated, devoted servant of Christ. In the three large and leading congregations in which he served, his motto was that of the great

Apostle, 'To me to live is Christ.' To preach the Saviour, and to illustrate His teaching in his own daily life, was his unceasing aim. Dr. Davey was a most self-effacing man; his humility was proverbial; his gentleness, and patience, and constant courtesy made him hosts of friends, and to his friends he was always loyal. He was a highly gifted minister; his sermons always displayed clear thinking, deep conviction, and a masterly grasp of the doctrines of Grace. His power of exposition was remarkable, and revealed true spiritual insight; his unique gift of persuasive speech, with his gracious and winning tones, was in itself a benediction. 'He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith, and much people was added unto the Lord.'

"The Presbytery desire to express their warmest sympathy with the mourning widow and her family, and they beg leave to assure them of their earnest prayers that the God of all grace may comfort and sustain them in this dark hour."

Resolutions of kindly sympathy poured in from the organisations and societies of the Church, and from the public bodies, Christian or philanthropic, with which he was intimately associated, all testifying their appreciation of his long and faithful public services, and of his wide-spread and lasting influence for all that was good, and voicing their sense of personal and public loss in his death. Hundreds of letters added their more personal tributes from writers of every class and creed, and helped to lighten the burden and illuminate the darkness of those who were left to mourn him as husband and father. These letters testify warmly of what he was to those outside his family circle; but what he was at home, the place where one is absolutely oneself, cannot be set down

in cold print. Enough that faith can look through the bars of the dread portal, and, seeing something of the glory of the place, can rest in hope.

> "Lord, where Thou art our happy dead must be;
> And, if with Thee, how great their bliss!
> Till faith be sight and hope reality
> Love's anchorage is this."

SERMON ECHOES

IV

A MAN has simply to do nothing to be lost.

When God leads a man into temptation, the man is never alone.

A church edifice has no glory or consecration but as a trysting-place where men meet with God.

It is not so much time we need to read the Bible as interest in it.

Wheresoever God lets down His ladder there is the House of God, be it busy mart or lonely desert.

O religious sluggard, go to the men of the world and learn a lesson, how you should seek the Kingdom of God; how hard they toil, how wholehearted, how attentive! Do you expect the ripe fruit of the kingdom to drop into your open mouth?

Have you gold in the bank for all the paper currency of your outward religious life?

Love is of God. It is a heavenly exotic planted in the soil of the human heart. Shield it carefully, and let it have much of the sunshine of heaven. If you cannot always walk hand in hand with charity, you can at least follow after charity. They are far behind who cannot follow.

There are few of us so enthusiastic, fanatical, mad enough, to be called wise by God.

CHAPTER IX

IMPRESSIONS AND RECOLLECTIONS

When one who holds communion with the skies,
Has filled his urn where those pure waters rise,
Descends, and dwells among the meaner things,
It is as if an angel shook his wings.

UNDER this heading we wish to touch upon a variety of points bearing upon Dr. Davey's life, labours, and personality, which have been gleaned from various sources, and which we think will be interesting in relation to his character and his work in general, as throwing a light upon the man himself.

As was remarked earlier, Dr. Davey had a wonderful power of getting near the hearts of those among whom his work lay. In the personal interviews which so often followed his meetings in all parts of the country, his intense sympathy broke down many a barrier of that reserve which is so universal in matters of religion. He could put awkward but necessary questions with a delicacy of feeling, accompanied by a sympathy of voice and manner, which won him many an open door into the heart-to-heart converse he was seeking. Instinctively he avoided the hackneyed and conventional forms which jar so much upon the sensitive soul; and his words had a naturalness or spontaneity such as inquirers after God

welcomed as the voice of reality. Phrases and questions which I have heard quoted from him, such as "I wonder if you know anything about these things," or "Have you any interest in what I have been talking about?" are infinitely easier to face than the well-worn question "Are you saved?" or the like, which often repels rather than helps an inquiring soul.

This tact and sympathy of Dr. Davey were not entirely unconscious things; he was fully conscious both of their need and value. In one of his addresses at a conference of Christian workers upon the subject of "The conversion of the young," he said (I quote from his manuscript): "We must try, if we would win the young, to get into sympathy with them. We must try to feel with them, and look at things from their point of view. We must, in thought and feeling, put ourselves beside them. How stupid many of us are in these matters, and how we forget our own unconverted days! We think only of our present position and forget theirs, and try to take them by storm. And when we think we have made an impression, we leave them saying in their heart 'He doesn't understand me.' I don't want you to bate one jot or tittle of the truth. Say your say about sin and about redemption, but learn to do it wisely. Know that the human mind is a difficult instrument to play upon and requires more than a little sympathetic study."

The same sympathy marked all his pastoral work. A friend has told us in this connection of Dr. Davey visiting him after a serious operation, when he was so ill and weak that he could not lift head or hand, nor bear the annoyance of conversation. Dr. Davey called one afternoon without knowing how weak the invalid was; and the latter felt greatly troubled when he saw

him come to his bedside, fearing a lengthy and exhausting talk and prayer. But Dr. Davey's sympathetic intuition, as usual, did not fail him. He took a long, steady look at the sick man, laid his hand gently upon him, saying "God bless you," and went straight out of the room and down the stairs into the street. "It was just what I needed and no more," said our informant; "and I can hardly tell you what a relief his action was or what an impression his tact and understanding made upon me that day. I shall never forget it."

One of the few letters from Dr. Davey's pen, with which friends have been able to furnish us, is a letter of sympathy written to a ministerial friend suddenly bereft of his mother shortly before the outbreak of the Great War. A few sentences may be quoted as revealing once more the warm sympathy and the unwavering faith of their writer. "I know how fond you were of your mother—how big a place she occupied in your life—and how heavily this blow will fall upon you. I can only pray for you, and this I am doing, that God will sustain and help you through this sharp trial; and that you may prove the truthfulness of the many gracious words of comfort that you have spoken to others in similar circumstances. May the great, kind-hearted Master remember you at this time with the love that He bears to His own; and may you be enabled to see the brighter side, and look steadily toward the Homeland whither your loved one has been gathered. . . . The Saviour's prayer has been answered for her—'Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory.' May you have grace to think of her as already sharing that glory of Christ. . . . I shall be often remembering you before God

during these days, that He may do for you exceeding abundantly above what we can ask or think; that you may be so sustained that it will help you in your ministry of comfort to others."

Again, all his work, public or private, was marked by absolute thoroughness, a quality which left its lasting impress on many of those who had the privilege of working with him. He let nothing slip, for he was one of those who are faithful in that which is least. Everything he did in public received the most minute and careful attention. Every sermon was written in full, but he never read a sermon, preaching to the last from notes only, and thus leaving himself free to speak as occasion prompted. His public prayers were always felt to be spontaneous and exceptionally inspiring and helpful, but not many knew that he prepared as carefully for the devotional part of the service as he did for the work of preaching. He was a firm believer in free prayer, but preparation he regarded as a help, not a hindrance, for he knew that the Spirit of God is a reasonable Spirit, and that common-sense is one of the chief weapons of the Gospel. He used to say "The man who makes no preparation for public prayer soon gets into a rut." He was never content to offer to God, in the name of the congregation, or to the congregation as the ambassador of God, the froth from the surface of his mind.

The faults of evangelism, which have so often brought it into contempt, were never his; he was the true evangelist both in heart and mind. He was in no sense an obscurantist, but a convinced admirer of all true scholarship, and, in matters Christian, of all humble, sincere, and careful research. From his boyhood he was an ardent reader, especially of serious literature and of

theology; and he had an intellectual enthusiasm of an intensity and scope which are very uncommon, and with which, owing to his extreme humility, he was rarely credited except by those who knew him intimately. For some years a close friend, whom death carried off all too early, sent him at Christmastide a large number of books, the cream of the literary and theological publications of the year, and you may be sure they did not lie upon the shelves unread. To the last day of his life Dr. Davey read continually and eagerly whenever he could snatch the opportunity. His work, however, was very exacting, and, as it received the fullest attention, his reading was perforce crammed for the most part into the seaside holiday in the summer; but all through the year, in tram-car or in bed, he would snatch at the scanty moments. His overcoat pocket was never without its book or periodical, and at his bedside there was always a considerable quantity of such mental pabulum. He had a passion for English poetry, and in particular, among the poets, for Tennyson, the prophet of a faith won by conflict, and held humbly but intensely amid the tragedies of life. Tennyson, indeed, came very near to his own heart and experience. His copy of Tennyson, which we treasure, is pencil-marked from beginning to end. "In Memoriam" he prized as a great gift of God to man by the mouth of his latter-day prophet. He loved the lyrics; and the dramatic force of such poems as "Locksley Hall" laid such a spell on him that, without committing them consciously to memory, he could repeat them practically all by heart. Shakespeare was another of his enthusiasms, and what he had read he knew. To live with him was in itself an education in the English classics. In prose his chief authors were Ruskin, Carlyle,

Emerson, and Scott. As a young man he read practically every book Ruskin wrote, and all his life he revelled in Carlyle. Good essays with a theological interest were to the last a mental stimulus which he greatly enjoyed. Science too he read, and he was neither ashamed nor afraid of reading the work of Darwin and others at first hand.

For his sermons his first preparation was to seek God upon his knees; his second often was to read a few pages of Ruskin or the like, that his work might in its form be worthy of its great theme. The more recent literature, too, he knew something of, though his reading-time was too short to permit of his knowing it well; but a paper he once wrote for a clerical club on "Chesterton" was so good that he was asked to publish it; though, with his usual humility, he would not do so. He had the most genuine love of knowledge for its own sake of any person I have ever met; geometry, jurisprudence, philosophy, literature,—he loved them all. The only subject of all he touched which he did not seem fully to appreciate was algebra, though even there his condemnation went no further than to label it "a bag of tricks"!

Reading he regarded as a *sine quâ non* of a developed life. In a sermon upon Luke x. 26, on one occasion he said: "Young man, how readest thou? Do you read at all, or do you forget your brain in the attention you give to your muscle?" And everything that he read he marked very thoroughly with a pencil for convenience in future reference. This continuous reading ministered to the breadth of mind which characterized him, and which found its foundations in his unique sympathy. A friend of one of his sons wrote after Dr. Davey's death: "You remember how he used to stand by and

let us argue away even when he disagreed. That was a great thing." Yes, he realised that sincerity was a far greater thing than agreement, and in all knowledge he sought truth rather than support for his prejudices.

Realising the nebulosity of much that passed for preaching, he aimed ever in his pulpit work at faithful exposition of Scripture, believing that the truth had nothing to lose by accuracy of scholarship. His intellectual ideal was as high as his intellectual enthusiasm was unique, and he never spared himself in seeking to realise it. Those who found themselves in some serious discussion with him soon discovered the keenness of his intellect; he could see the weak spot in an argument and fasten upon it instantaneously, but his own use of argument was always sympathetic and candid. He scorned to take a mean advantage of an opponent, and he despised all argument, however tempting, which might be indulged in for the mere sake of scoring dialectical points.

Again, Dr. Davey had a fine dramatic sense, and exceptional talents of the histrionic order, which found an ample scope in his pulpit work. His intense sincerity was certainly the chief note in his influence as a preacher, but it was helped out by great ability to say things in the right way and with the accompaniment of appropriate gesture. He had the knack of epigram and of the phrase which sticks, as the quoted echoes from his pulpit will show; the gift of telling a story well or of asking a question in a way which challenged an answer from all within earshot; while gesture came naturally and simply to him whether at home or in public. The absolute ease and spontaneity of his gestures were often remarked. A friend says: "I remember how, in an address to the

children, he described the soaring away into freedom of a captive eagle. As he spoke of its rising aloft, his own arms rose in sympathetic interpretation so naturally that I felt no eagle could have done it any better." And again: "In an evening sermon upon Absalom Mr. Davey gave us a character sketch or impersonation of that unfortunate but ambitious prince stealing the hearts of the men of Israel, and one felt in listening that it was no wonder that the young schemer was so successful in his intrigues if he were anything like the characterization given of him; it was so vivid in its dramatic realism." His power of story-telling made him in private life a raconteur of no mean merit; and there, too, was to be seen his power of keen and apt repartee. Though he possessed the gift of speech in an eminent degree, he had a great dread of a "fatal fluency" either in himself or others. He always said that what cost little meant little, and that cost was the condition of the best work; and he knew that not ease, but intensity of conviction and of feeling, was the secret of success in speaking. Few men have had the same magnetic spell in their preaching. As one friend has said of his best years, "The last ten minutes of his sermons were tremendous." When he reached the climax of his appeal to his hearers, one could have heard the proverbial pin drop anywhere in the building. His words arrested and held all who were within hearing, and one could not but face the issues of life squarely and clearly within sound of that voice, for the spiritual power of an intense enthusiasm and certainty was behind all his pulpit work.

Turning to his more personal characteristics, Dr. Davey's voice, though exceptionally full and resonant, was marvellously sympathetic and persuasive; his whole

personality surged into it. Indeed, a member of his church once said to a friend: "I would rather have Mr. Davey's cough than many another man's sermon." And another, a lady, said: "What a wonderful gift his voice is, it is so soft and gentle in a sick-room."

Nature, again, had given him a splendid physique. He was straight as a die, tall, yet broad even in proportion to his height; he had the Davey shoulders, and in every sense was a strong, well-built sample of manhood. Yet even his physique could not stand the strain he threw upon it. As a young man, and indeed all through his life, he overworked both body and mind. His work was so exacting that he practically never took a rest-day in his week, or indeed more than perhaps a morning off inside a fortnight or three weeks, except, of course, during his annual holiday, the days of which were of necessity very precious to him. In addition to the quantity of his work must be remembered its quality of intensity. He died at a comparatively early age mainly because the spirit was more willing than the flesh was strong, as several severe breakdowns had already made abundantly clear; his public work was punctuated all through by these distressing evidences of overwork and overstrain. Yet had he played for safety he would not have been the man he was; he lived dangerously, but it was the life of faith, of power, and of victory.

Again, to turn to the side of character and inward life, Dr. Davey was a man with a genuine and intense spiritual experience of struggle, and victory by struggling. The sincerity of his preaching, which, more than anything else—except his living out what he preached—impressed his hearers, stood rooted in a religious experience which was absolutely his own, deep and sincere; and, however

much the words he used might resemble the words of other men, the effect of them was unique and direct, because of the personality which breathed through everything, through voice and bearing, through gesture and speech. He well understood the true and ultimate meaning of faith—that word about which men have fought so much and to so little purpose—and he knew better than most men the conflict by which "faith overcometh the world." He knew what faith as venture meant, he knew what faith as trust meant; and, above all, he lived what he knew. Of a well-meaning Christian worker in one of his churches, who was glib in his references to faith, he once said to the writer: "I sometimes doubt if he even knows what faith is." His own knowledge had been won at a cost. I have heard from his own lips of nights of prayer when he fell asleep on his knees from sheer weariness as he wrestled for truth, or peace, or power from above. His unusual sympathy and understanding were the fruits of such mental strife, and no one who knew him will doubt that the struggle was worth while. But not only in the matter of faith, but in all life, he felt the conflict between the values of this world and the values of God, and he realised the need of the Christian soul-warfare in every circumstance and aspect of life. He used to speak of the necessity of developing the kindlier as well as the stronger virtues, such, for example, as generosity, and of how the soul must grow parched and dry if one is ever seeking to draw in, not to give out. His own early struggle had made him realise the exact value of money; and he knew the dangers of meanness of soul and smallness of horizon which such a struggle brought with it for many of those who heard him. "If some of us," he once said,

"have by circumstances learned the precise value of a penny, and been forced to look rather often at that side of life, let us at least teach our children to be generous."

I have spoken already of his fearlessness in matters of thought, of reading, and of faith; one other striking example of the same quality of unwavering courage, but in a different context, was his fearlessness in visiting the sick. No disease, however deadly, ever deterred him from the fullest pastoral care and ministry of comfort in relation to those who were ill. As told elsewhere, he visited fever patients when no others would go near them, and he never took any serious harm from such visits. He shrank from no call of duty however perilous or exacting. Even in the last few days of his life, when he was very unwell, he continued to visit those who needed his help.

In compiling a memoir which shall be more than an appreciation of his character, and contain some account of his labours in the world without, the chief difficulty has been one outcome of the humility of his whole life, viz., his reticence regarding his work. His ministrations were unobtrusive and quiet; greatness he never sought; and of his work he hardly ever spoke even to his nearest. His object in life was to do work, not to talk about it; and for the purposes of this sketch his silence and the absence of personal records have been a real difficulty. We have had to depend on the help and testimony of those whose lives touched his at one point or another; and for the earlier part of his public work such help can hardly be got at all, many of those influenced being themselves dead or beyond the years of clear recollection, and many others scattered through the world beyond our knowledge or reach. Yet, had he

gloried in his work and amassed records of its success, he would not have been the man we have known, and we cannot very consistently regret a defect in our sketch which springs from the very qualities that made him great and greatly beloved.

One or two miscellaneous points of interest may be mentioned further as illustrating the breadth or the depth of his personality and interests. Dr. Davey, brought up in the country, and with a spontaneous interest in all healthy things, was to the end a lover of the fresh air and of clean sport of all kinds. His was no narrow view of life, and he could enter with zest into all healthy games and recreations. He was, moreover, a great lover of animals, and all kinds of sport and exercise drew him as an interested onlooker. His bodily physique surely testified to his own love of healthy exercise in the days when it was possible for him to have it in abundance, especially in youth. Athletics and open-air games in particular attracted him, and many a football match of either code found him among the spectators if an hour or two could be spared, for the sake of seeing his country, his province, his old college, or his sons' schools fighting for the fleeting triumph of a win in goals or points. But such opportunities, nevertheless, were very rarely to be found or made in such a life as his.

Another very marked characteristic of Dr. Davey's personality was a sense of humour both quick and keen. In his home life it was continually in exercise, but in all his life and work it had its place. It is difficult, however, to catch for the printer so transient, elusive, and delicate a thing as spontaneous humour; and the examples which I shall give as evidence in this connection I take from

the written pages of a public lecture upon his journey to South Africa, delivered in the autumn of 1897, after his return from that country in renewed health. In dealing with his journey out from London to Cape Town, he introduced his audience briefly to a few of his fellow-passengers. I select some sentences for quotation at this point: "I must speak well of them all in a general way; some of them I shall not soon forget. A number of them had a distinctly marked individuality that brings them up when I think of the ship. There was an English lady of uncertain age, going out to push her fortune, who played the violin with much skill, and had the gift of speech very fully developed! When I was not intent upon a book, it was a pleasant thing to meet her at a corner of the ship; but if I wanted to read, as indeed I very often did, it was a calamity. Then there was a Salvation Army family going out to make an attack upon Cape Town, the father a journalist, the mother something better; I am sure they will make their mark wherever they are. Next there comes across my mind a young married lady who was going out to Cape Colony to join her husband. She seemed to enjoy herself wonderfully, notwithstanding her husband's absence, especially with the male passengers; in fact she seemed to take an interest in all men for her husband's sake. After her I see a young lady from Scotland who was going out to be married. She told her errand to the captain as a great secret; then she told it to a minister who was on board, also as a secret; and by-and-by somehow, but not through the minister, or the captain either I think, most of the passengers knew it—as a secret. I could go on long enough telling you of many others. The gentlemen were not so interesting as the ladies, and therefore

I pass them over without specific mention." Later, speaking of some Americans on board, he told a story which he often delighted to tell, not indeed of one of his fellow American passengers, but of another of the race possessed of a bland and child-like curiosity about other people's affairs, that led him to ask questions about everything, and ultimately led him to fame as one of the interlocutors in the following conversation: "Some Irish people have it too [he writes], this easy, child-like way of interesting themselves in others, but the Americans have reduced it to a fine art. The person I refer to came and sat right in front of a gentleman in a railway carriage, and, by way of introducing himself in a delicate way, he said: 'Stranger, I think I have met you somewhere.' 'Oh, very likely,' said the stranger, 'I am often there.' 'What might your name be?' went on the guileless but persevering American. 'My name might be John Brown or Tom Smith,' said the stranger, 'but it's not.' That is all I heard of the interview; very likely it stopped there." He pursues the journey then in his manuscript, from the East India docks to Southampton, Las Palmas, and so to Cape Town. The whole of his tour in Cape Colony and the Transvaal is described in a most interesting way, but little of it lends itself to quotation in this volume, as it is mainly descriptive of the scenery, the industries, the political and social situation, and the like. Speaking of some very rough weather which they encountered on the African coast, he says: "For a few days we had a good deal of pitching and rolling; and a number of the passengers, unaccustomed to travelling, became deeply interested in the question, how far a vessel can roll in any given direction before she will roll over. Their curiosity in that direction, how-

ever, was not gratified in a practical way, for the vessel did not roll over; but she rolled far enough to break plenty of crockery and to make things wonderfully uncomfortable for some of the passengers." Referring to the old Boer farmers and their isolation, he says: "There are still very few people in the countryside, though it is not so lonely as in the old days, when the Dutch farmer was not satisfied to have a neighbour that he could see; if anyone came between him and the horizon, he trekked —it was a congested district!" And later, he says of the Transvaal coinage: "The smallest coin in circulation is a threepenny-bit. What an advantage an arrangement like that would be to us on Sabbaths!"

Before I pass from the lecture in question, I should like to quote two brief passages which reveal his vivid sense of the beauty, the power, and the appeal of nature. He writes of the mountains of the up-country over which he passed from Cape Town: "For miles and miles we were creeping up the sides of the mountains in the train, winding out and in, and making some of the sharpest curves, and then in a few moments looking down upon the line we had just come up on the other side of the valley. The sun was sloping westward as we pushed our way up among those strong old hills, and I seemed to feel the spirit of the mountains enter into me as if I were part of them. It was an afternoon which left a mental photograph that will stay with me." And later, speaking of his return to Cape Town, he says: "On my way back to Cape Town, after visiting Kimberley, Johannesburg, and Pretoria, I made only one break, staying about a week at a little place called Beaufort West. It was very quiet and very beautiful, and the air was light and clear and balmy. I shall never forget my

Sabbath morning there. The place was perfectly still except for the sound of the church bells, and as I listened to their music, and felt the perfect calm that was everywhere around, and looked at the distant hills, distant indeed, yet apparently so near, with the light of God upon their old wrinkled faces, there was printed on my mind a picture that shall never be forgotten while life lasts. There was no Presbyterian church there, so I worshipped at the Methodist, but I should have found it easy to worship anywhere, with or without a minister to help me, that July day."

In all his work, to turn to another point, he had the democratic spirit. To him, in his work as pastor, class meant nothing, and there was no respect of persons; he believed in the Gospel of Jesus Christ as making all men equal before God, and upon that basis he treated everyone to whom he had occasion to minister, whatever their social or other status. His tireless and unabated enthusiasm for the seemingly commonplace and often monotonous work of pastoral visitation was a perpetual source of astonishment to many. He had the reputation—not easily earned—of being "a good visitor" (in the semi-technical sense the word has acquired in this connection), and the secret of his unwearying interest was simply his untiring religious faith, which found every man or woman and every circumstance of life of real interest, even as they are to the Almighty;—he had the mind of Christ and the values of Christ in all that he did.

References have already been made to the fact that in his public work he had an extraordinary gift of making real to others the things he believed in. One member of Fisherwick, for example, speaking of the short address which Dr. Davey used to give at the communion service,

after the elements had been partaken of, said to us recently: "You could feel the congregation very obviously settling down to listen when he rose to speak, and a great quietness fell on the whole place, for we all knew that what was to come was the gem of the whole service, and indeed of all Dr. Davey's ministry among us." Many have spoken to us in the same strain of these post-communion addresses as the most inspiring and memorable part of an inspiring and memorable pastorate, and as leading them more than anything else into the very presence of God upon the mount of fellowship and blessing.

And it was so in measure with all his work. In his communion services, as I have said, he seemed to lift his hearers right into heaven with its adoration of the Lamb that had been slain, and its fellowship of the saints; in his evangelistic work, all through his life, he seemed to bring men and women face to face with the Great White Throne of judgment, and with the grace as well as the holiness of Him who sat thereon; in his ministry of comfort to the sick and dying he could lead the bruised spirit into the atmosphere of the Father's house with its many mansions, and of an inheritance that fadeth not away; in the time of bereavement and mourning there were balm and consolation for broken hearts in all that he did or said; in his sermons to those treading the pathway of the Christian life, the message was searching, uncompromising, yet encouraging and inspiring, as he set forth the ideals of Christian character and conduct which he sought to practise in his own life; everywhere, and at all times, his words, like his personality, rang true, and men and women, athirst for reality, were led into the very Holy of Holies as the things invisible made

their presence known in the heart through the word of God's minister and interpreter.

In the pursuit of his vocation—for his work was no mere "profession"—he was equally and sincerely the friend of all classes and types; and at his funeral were mingled the tears of all ranks or grades in the community. Like the old-world Christian whose memory still lives in a simple but touching epitaph, "he was the friend of all and the enemy of none."

CHAPTER X

THE PREACHER

I had rather stand
A prophet of my God—with all the thrills
Of trembling which must shake the heart of one
Who in earth's garments, in the vesture frail
Of flesh and blood, is called to minister
As seraphs do with fire—than bear the palm
Of any other triumph. This my joy,
The Lord fulfilled.

VARIOUS references have been made to Dr. Davey's work as a preacher in the course of our story, references both to its substance and manner, and to its power and results; in this chapter we shall merely seek to supplement these earlier references, and to illustrate our picture briefly from the preacher's own manuscripts which have been left us; for we have felt that a memoir of Dr. Davey's life would be very incomplete, indeed, without a greater measure of quotation from his own words than is to be found in the earlier chapters of this volume. The chapter which follows this will also deal with the manuscripts of his public ministry, though in a somewhat different aspect—that of writer as distinct from preacher. We believe that his outstanding powers as a speaker warrant the compilation of such chapters; that they will but add to the life-story which has been told, and to

many of his former hearers and friends will have a peculiar interest as a kind of last word from himself.

Dr. Davey has left behind him nearly two thousand sermons and a fair number of other written addresses delivered at conferences, guilds, young men's associations, clerical clubs, and the like. He rarely delivered a sermon twice; and, if he did so at all, the sermon suffered considerably in the way of alteration and modification. It has not been possible in the very limited time at our disposal to cover more than a very small corner of the field here presented to the biographer, and it has not been easy to choose what sermons and addresses should be read for the purposes of such a chapter. We cannot claim that we have chosen the best—we can only claim that we have chosen some which are typical of his work in general; but a few preliminary cautions and observations are here called for. To begin with, Dr. Davey was, in his sermon-writing, a preacher, not an essayist. The aim of his sermons was ever practical, not literary. His literary gifts were considerable, as will be evident from the form and polish of some addresses, not sermons, which we shall quote in part, and which were written to be read as they stand, not to be delivered freely as sermons. He never read his sermons, he never even used the manuscripts in delivery; hence the sermons as written were but guides to his preaching, and the wording, and even part of the subject-matter, were provided by the inspiration of the moment working upon the written sermon as a basis in memory. Hence his sermons as delivered were very different from their written forms as left to us; they were more to the point because fitted to the actual environment of the speaker, more colloquial sometimes, more finished in vigorous

literary form at other times under the inspiration of a great opportunity, and, speaking generally, more effective. The written manuscripts are but a skeleton without life or power compared with the sermons as he preached them, sermons throbbing with conviction, spiritual intensity, and the power of a simple, natural rhetoric born of the moment and the needs of his hearers. A friend told us years ago how he heard him preaching in Ballymena upon the subject of Naaman, a sermon which he spoke of as "magnificent." Some months later he heard him preach at Ahoghill from the same text, and he has told us that he would not have recognised the sermon—it was so different; but he thought it even better. This is one example of the great difference that there was between Dr. Davey's sermons as written and as preached, for in both cases the manuscript, which was the basis of the sermon, was the same. Thus his manuscripts were only a kind of first draft, and never received the polish which they would have been given had the *ipsissima verba* been intended for exact use. Dr. Davey had all the equipment and enthusiasm of the literary artist when the work to be done was for reading or publication, as extracts will show; but his written sermons lack the final polish of the essayist, which they did not need, as he was not writer but speaker in relation to them. Indeed, such a final polish would have militated against his freedom in speech, as a thing once well expressed in words demands the perfection of form which has been found, and thus makes greater demands on the memory and less upon the intelligence. By denying this last touch the preacher was enabled, with greater mental freedom, to improve, modify, or otherwise alter his language, as circumstances primarily,

and not literary taste, might demand. Preaching is not reading, and, however well a thing may be read, it must be on a lower level than a direct message, which is only given its final form as eye meets eye; the man whose eye is upon his paper loses something of immediate spiritual touch and direct personal magnetism in so speaking. Dr. Davey was indeed right in his method, but from his biographer this point has demanded notice lest an unfair criticism in measure might be passed on some quotations which follow. When the manuscript of any of his sermons was actually called for that it might appear in print, it passed through a great deal of pruning and polishing before Dr. Davey would permit it out of his hands, and he would hardly approve of any use of his manuscripts which did not preface that use with such an explanation as the foregoing. The quotations to be given later from his addresses written for reading or publication will make quite evident his literary power and artistry in words, when a greater emphasis naturally fell upon the form of what he said. Sermons however he regarded, not as literature, but as practical means to the salvation of men's lives. When indeed literary form was called for, his mind, steeped as it was in the English of Carlyle and Ruskin, Shakespeare and Tennyson, showed its innate literary bent and its power of forcible and telling expression. He has a style of his own, an effective style, full of literary grace and strength, illuminated by apt illustrations, telling sarcasm, a light and pointed humour, and at times a telling beauty or vigour of appeal. But for this chapter we shall confine ourselves to the written scaffolding of his practical pulpit discourses.

In his sermons, further, the articulation of his subject matter is clear and definite. Form is emphatically

marked, the thought lucid, and the sequence good. The characterization is often brilliant, the illustrations apt and pointed, and the endings powerful. He had a great realistic power, too, in the painting of scenes, which made an effective background for his strength of appeal.

Again, to deal with the preacher adequately in print is impossible; for in preaching, personality is almost everything, and without it preaching can avail little or nothing. Only those can fully appreciate or understand Dr. Davey as a preacher who heard him preach; nevertheless, a chapter upon this subject, elusive as it is in its nature, will no doubt have something of value or interest for readers, and especially for those who can call the memory of his voice, his manner, and his personality generally to their aid in visualizing that living form of his preaching of which here we can only provide the skeleton. Voice, gesture, expression,—all are lost in the cold print, and yet they are no small part of that self-expression of personality which we call preaching. His voice was sympathetic, full, and rich; his gestures were natural, spontaneous, and fitting; his face lent itself perfectly to the reflection of his theme; and these things can only be filled in in any adequate sense by those who knew him.

Of his sermons generally there are two main types —the evangelistic, aiming at the winning of human souls to the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to the service of God; and the pastoral, aiming at the edification or upbuilding of the flock of God in the virtues of the Christian life and in the spirit of the Master. Usually the latter was the type of the morning sermon, and the former of the evening; but this was not an invariable principle, nor do these two types exhaust the scope of his pulpit work

entirely, though they cover most of the ground which sermons can with safety or wisdom attempt to circumscribe.

Frequently, Dr. Davey was very happy in his beginnings, finding some natural or arresting thought which formed an easy and effective gateway to his subject. His sermons upon historical characters and subjects were peculiarly good in their painting of the character or scene in question as a prelude to the use of the picture for the work of edification or evangelism. Dr. Davey's dramatic sense and sympathetic insight gave him a great power of realism in the pulpit. Nor was this dramatic gift alone among his literary gifts; he had a telling power of using the great literary figures and methods; sarcasm, climax or anticlimax, metaphor, allegory, and illustration, all adorned his pulpit work, though not infrequently, being born of the inspiration of the moment, they have left no record in the written manuscript which, as said above, was for Dr. Davey not a record of what he said, but at most a guide to his thought and speech in addressing the congregation.

Of his beginnings I shall give three short quotations, not as pre-eminent in literary quality, but as typical of his methods. The sermon to be quoted later, on the words "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength," has this very natural introduction: "If one were to ask us for what purpose we come here, why we leave our homes and the occupations of the secular part of the week, and come and take our seat in this house of prayer once or twice in seven days, some of us, if the question were put unexpectedly, would perhaps be at a loss to know just what to say. And those who would answer would not all give the same answer either in form or

substance. Some, occupying themselves with the divine side of the matter exclusively, would say, 'We are here in obedience to the Lord's commandment. He has told us not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, to remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy, and we know no better way of keeping this day holy than by assembling in the great congregation for praise and prayer and for Christian communion and instruction.' Others, keeping in view rather the human side of the question, would say, 'We are here because of our spiritual necessities. We have been in the world and we are tired of it; we have felt its chilly breath blowing upon us; we have transacted business with its children, and have found them cold and unsympathetic. The world altogether we have found a hard, rough place to live in, and we have come into the sanctuary this morning as into a place of rest, that we may sit down under the shadow of the Almighty and commune with Him, and gain strength for the days that are coming. We come because we know from blessed experience that God is here.' In other words, some of us have come here to renew our strength, and many of us have come to wait upon God. And so my text this morning is a suitable one for a congregation met for worship, containing as it does a liberal promise of help to every devout soul that has come to worship the Lord."

Another sermon, upon the words "Not far from the Kingdom of God," begins thus: "There is a portion of land where England and Scotland touch called 'The Border.' This border has been the subject of much dispute and the scene of many conflicts between the two nations. In the great spiritual world there is also what may be called 'the border.' Happily,

there are many in every Christian community whose life and conduct are such that, without hesitation, we pronounce them children of God, and, unhappily, there are also many in every Christian community whose life and conduct are such that, without hesitation, we pronounce them children of wrath. But there is another class, and there is scarcely anything in their outward life to indicate whether they belong to the one class or the other. They are, or seem to be, on the border. And this border-land is the scene of some of the most violent conflicts in the spiritual world. Satan does not trouble himself much with many of his servants; they serve him so well; they are so thoroughly wedded to their sins, so violent in their passions, so far from the Kingdom of God that they do not call for any special attention. But these borderers, who live so near the margin of the kingdom of righteousness, and who are so dissatisfied with his rule, are—if you will allow the phrase—a source of perpetual anxiety to him. They are so near the Kingdom of God, and so many influences are at work to bring them in, that they may step over the border at any time and escape his jurisdiction; and so he plies all his arts to keep them in his grasp. I believe we have in this congregation to-night many of these borderers, many who may be addressed in the Saviour's words, 'Thou art not far from the Kingdom of God'; and this is my reason for taking this subject. I hope that, by describing their case and calling their attention to the fact that they are on the border, I may be the means of inducing some of them to cross, and to know the liberty of the people of God."

A further example of a different kind is the beginning of a New Year's sermon upon the motto for the year—he was in the habit of having a motto card

printed each year and presented to the members of his congregation in St. Enoch's. It runs thus: "I have set before me the task of finding a text that may be of use to us all during this year of 1896; a text that will suit the young, the middle-aged, the old; which the invalid may take to the sick-room, the artisan to the workshop, the farmer to the plough, the soldier to the barrack-room —a word in the strength of which we may go forth to our daily task in the morning, and whose music may soothe or inspire us in the eventide when the shadows are falling. I think I have found such a text. For a stormy world like this, in which the unexpected so often happens, what better message could come to us even from heaven than this—'Have faith in God.'"

Admittedly, his greatest strength lay in his power of appeal, his power of arresting men and forcing them to face the issues of life fairly and squarely. The last minutes of nearly all his evangelistic sermons had the same remarkable power and grip. Every Sunday night there came upon the people a great hush of absolute stillness, except for the voice of the preacher, as, with many hundreds hanging upon his words, he drove home the thought of reckoning or need, and called upon his hearers to sit in judgment upon their own hearts and lives. He was especially desirous of making men view life from its end, believing that the truest judgment is that which a man will pass in the clear light of the impending passage to the land beyond our petty lusts and ambitions. Yet it was not as an alarmist that he chose to paint the great white throne of eternity; it was ever with the pleading of a heart that understood and felt with his hearers, yet realised the tremendous facts of life as God has shown them to the awakened souls of

men. A vigour and fertility of illustration marks all his evangelistic work, but the challenging note is always balanced by the tenderness of his sympathy. Of his evangelistic appeals I wish to give some examples, both to illustrate my remarks, and that he being dead may yet speak the message with which he was sent of God.

In a sermon upon the words "How is it that ye have no faith?" he concludes thus: "The reason why many of you have no faith is because you have no thought. Until God sends a storm that will well-nigh overturn you, you will not pause to think. He must bring you face to face with death or disease before you will think at all about your soul's interests. And when I implore and beseech you to-day to stop and think about these things, an indistinct murmur comes up from your hearts, and, so far as I can interpret it, is something like this: 'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it; I pray thee have me excused.' And I want to say as a closing word that there will be a house or farm to let some day before long, and that house or farm will be yours. What of yourself in that day? There will be a shop to let in one of the Belfast streets, and that shop will be yours. Yes, these things are so. How is it, then, with such a slender, unstable life, with such an eternity before you, and with such things at stake, that ye have no faith?"

To take another example of the evangelistic appeal, this time with the tender note so frequent in his preaching, the following passages occur in a sermon upon the text "Come now and let us reason together . . . though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow." "But observe, it is not anything and everything

about sin that we are invited to consider. God does not say 'Come and let us consider the origin of sin—why sin was permitted to come into the world at all.' Ah! how we all long to have some light thrown upon that question! Nor does He say 'Come and let us consider the ethical nature of sin—is it an entity or a defect, a plus or a minus?' No, none of these nice and subtle questions, however much we might desire it. Read the text again: 'Come now and let us reason together, saith the Lord. Though your sins . . .' Yes, that is it. *Your* sins. How this narrows the field for controversy and thought. Some of us had been so accustomed to think of sin in the abstract, and of other people's sins, that we had almost forgotten that we had any sins ourselves. Are we prepared for this? He comes to each of us to-night, bearing the torch of truth to carry it into our inmost soul, and to expose to our view the sins of a lifetime. You cannot get Him past your sins; you cannot get Him to change the subject. He will not listen to your praises nor hear your prayers until you fairly and fully discuss the question of your sin. And this I admit is serious work, and painful too, for there is a sting in sin. Pages of your history that you had sealed, and put away until the judgment, He will open and read to you. Sins that you had buried He will raise from the dead and cause to stand again before you. Dark parts of your nature will be illuminated, and you will find some things in your heart you did not expect to find there. Now, some of you to-night will almost tremble to have your life so investigated; you would almost rather defer the evil day to the final judgment. Yet, do not shrink from it, however great your sin. You cannot do a better thing than meet with God,—and He is merciful; His heart is

kind. He does these things because He must, and He will take no unfair advantage of you. . . ."

Later, after speaking of God's reasoning with man in the Scriptures, he continues: "Again, God reasons with us all by means of conscience. We may not care to hear the Word of God, but all must listen to the voice of conscience. There may be some here to-night who have succeeded in silencing even that voice. He is God's ambassador to your soul, but you have not treated him kindly. You cannot cast him out; but you have bound his limbs, put out his eyes, and thrust him down into the deepest and darkest chambers of your soul, and will not give him an audience. This however cannot, I think, be true of many of you. Most of you find conscience a canker, a sting. You cannot enjoy the world and its pleasures as you would, because of his presence with you. Sometimes in the midst of gay and worldly companions, when fools are making merry and mocking at eternal things, he speaks to you. Unheard by others, to you his voice is louder than thunder. And, my friend, I say to you in love, 'If you will not listen to his voice now, there is a day coming when, in a darker world than this, he will wake up like an angry lion and will call to your mind all the opportunities you cast aside, the warnings and entreaties of the messengers of the Gospel, the strivings of the Spirit, and the knockings of the Saviour at your heart's door.' I might speak of many other ways in which God reasons with men, such as personal afflictions, family trials, national judgments, but I have only time to speak of one more. The greatest argument and the greatest condemnation of our sin is found in the Cross of Christ. This is God's most potent reasoning with the human family. Come with me to-night and

together let us look upon this spectacle, and what all other arguments have failed to do may this accomplish. You know the story of His life's close, the life of the Son of God. They pierced His hands and feet, they nailed Him to the tree, and there He hangs, a whole eternity of pain compressed within those few short hours, until at length He cried 'It is finished,' and, bowing His head, gave up the ghost. Yet tarry; do not leave this sacred place. Look at His wounds, and may each have a tongue to speak to you of God's great love. Will not this great argument of Divine love win us? God has spoken to us before. From Sinai's top, in stern and solemn accents we have heard the Law. Within ourselves we each have heard the mutterings of another Sinai, and we have trembled. But here is a voice to the guilty soul sweeter than the softest music, tremulous with mercy. To each of us He seems to say, 'Hear Me, O erring one. Thou hast destroyed thyself, but in Me is thy help. I have taken into My own bosom the sting of thy sin. Believe in Me, trust in Me; then go and sin no more.' And what shall be your response? Do you still remain hard and resolute in sin? Do you refuse an interview with God? Then know that if you will not meet Him at the Cross, where He is most tender, you must meet Him later and under very different circumstances; you must meet Him at the throne, not to reason with Him, but to hear from His lips your sentence; for it is written 'We shall all stand before the judgment seat of God, and each one of us shall give account of himself to God.'"

To take another and a short quotation from the sermon upon the words "Not far from the Kingdom of God," the closing paragraph runs thus: "It is a great

yet a solemn thing to be near to the Kingdom of God. It is a great thing to be near it just because it is a great thing to be in it. It is a solemn thing to be near it, because, if we miss it, the thought will bite like a serpent and sting like an adder. 'Near' is not 'in.' We have all had seasons when we were near. Some of you are there now—almost persuaded—walking round the city of God with the gates open, but not within. Oh, how dreadful if you miss that! The Spirit and the Bride say 'Come'; the prayers of God's people seem to waft you towards the gate. Come."

My next quotation of an evangelistic appeal, also short, shall be the closing words of a sermon, not in itself primarily evangelistic, upon the text "Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto His sorrow." It runs as follows: "What finally is the fruit of His sorrow? We read that He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied. Satisfied!—that means much. A very large heaven indeed if Jesus is satisfied. Will you help to give Him joy? We read again of the fruit of His sorrow in a great multitude which no man can number, out of all peoples, and kindreds, and tongues. In the vision of the seer the multitude is gathered—will you be among them? They bear the triumphal palms of those who have overcome. Are you overcoming? Their robes are washed in the blood of the Lamb. Have you washed yours? Do not miss that gathering. In their midst shall be He who was a man of sorrows, but a man of sorrows no more,—the Man of God's right hand. Will not that day of triumphant joy be worth it all, worth all the toil and all the sorrow, both of His sacrifice and of our pilgrimage? Assuredly it will.

'The King there in His beauty
Without a veil is seen;
That were a well-spent journey
Though seven deaths lay between.
The Lamb with His fair army
Doth on Mount Zion stand,
And glory, glory dwelleth
In Immanuel's land!'"

And my last quotation of such an appeal will serve to illustrate Dr. Davey's power of climax, which he so often used with effect in his preaching; it comes from a morning sermon of the pastoral type upon the words "More than conquerors." "Your child has a task to face which is difficult to accomplish, but you know the value of encouragement, and so you promise him something which makes it worth his while to struggle. Even so does the Saviour of mankind with His children. He says to us, 'To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God.' And again, 'Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out.' Is that worth struggling for? If you think not, listen to this: 'To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame and am sat down with My Father in His throne.' If you do not think even that good enough, listen to this: 'He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be My son.' Surely the dullest of us can see something in all this worth contending for. . . . And so we may be more than conquerors.

"I do not know, my friends, how it will be with you all the way, how often your weapon may be shivered to pieces in your hand, how many actual battles you may lose; but I know that, if your heart is with Him, you

will win through at last to be crowned a victor and to sit with Him in His throne."

Turning now to the sermons directed to the upbuilding of Christian character and the guidance of Christian impulses, sermons which we may call pastoral or edificatory, the chief features we note are the concreteness of application, the directness of practical appeal, and the fervour of the personal devotion from which the words spring forth. Examples are here hard to choose, owing to the variety of subject and of style, but I have made my choice of some passages, not indeed as the best of his written sermons, but as characteristic of his method and powers. One other fact of interest which I might note here in passing is that Dr. Davey was never content to close any sermon, whether addressed to professing Christians or no, without some word for those who stood without the Kingdom; but I do not purpose to dwell further, in spite of much temptation to do so, upon the subject of his evangelistic appeals; I merely note this fact as a finger-post to the zeal and yearning for the winning of human souls to Christ which characterized all his labours as evangelist or pastor.

My first quotation comes from a sermon upon the words "Adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things," a sermon entitled "Making religion beautiful." After dealing with the historical setting of the text, emphasising in particular the fact that it is the despised and degraded class of slaves who are called to make their Christianity beautiful and attractive, the preacher goes on to speak of the high ideal set before these persons and of the practicability of the advice given them. I quote at this point: "Let us linger here for a little over the thought that Christianity, the good thing

which Christ brought to the world, can be adorned, beautified, put in a setting in connection with human life that will make it look better and greater and more glorious; or, on the other hand, it can be degraded, cheapened, and made ugly. Christianity to those outside its influence had no halo about its head in those days. For you and me it is otherwise; we cannot help looking at it in the light of all the institutions it has created and all the good it has done. To the man of that time it was a bare, bald, rather repulsive thing. It was in the first instance a story, the strangest ever human ears had heard, of one who was executed as a criminal by the ordinary processes of the law, and it was claimed by His followers that He rose again, and His death and His resurrection were said to be in the interests of all sinful men. And it was by the repetition of these statements, or such as these, that it was to be advanced. And, of those outside the grip of it, some said 'How bare it is,' and others said 'How unphilosophical,' and others said 'What a stumbling-block to sensible people!' How was such a religion to live at all? By the good, pure, and elevated life of those who professed it. They were to frame it around, as it were, with beautiful lives, lives of obedience and truthfulness, modesty and humility, till all men should stop and re-examine the Gospel that was capable of producing such results. And it is not in the least different to-day. I know that historical Christianity has in it a great deal that is beautiful to attract and hold our attention; but sometimes, when a person gifted with caustic speech begins in real earnest to show up the weaknesses of the Church, and of Christianity as we believe it, and to uncover its sores, we begin presently to see that all the work of adorning the doctrine of God

our Saviour has not yet been done. There remains much for us to do. Many of us, so far from adorning Christianity, have made it commonplace or despised, and have put weapons in the hands of everyone who chooses to attack it; we have provoked the inquiry whether there is anything in it after all that makes any great difference between the Christian and his fellows. . . . What a privilege it is that God has conferred upon you and me, to gild the refined gold, to paint the lily, to add beauty to the Gospel of His Son, that so our little lives here upon earth may mirror to men something of the heavenly life above us to which our spirits lie open, and to which, with unceasing efforts, we are reaching upward and forward. This is our privilege; and the Gospel is still a poor thing when it is not set in the framework of holy, pure, and devoted lives. But how, you will say, is this to be accomplished? . . . Now, above all, do not fail to see that it is in the common things of life that we are to adorn the religion we profess. Overwhelmed to-day with the importance of this duty you may, perhaps, say, 'I will take to the distribution of tracts,' or 'I will begin and organise a series of cottage meetings,' or 'I will teach in the Sabbath-school,' or 'I will take to sick visitation'; and that these things may be a means of adorning the doctrine of God is not denied, but they are somewhat discounted since many have taken to them who lacked the common virtues. There is a far better way of doing it; let your Christianity be woven into the common concerns of your life. As a daughter, think more about how you might help your mother; as a son, be more careful than you have been to honour your parents; as a master, be humane and courteous, and pay for the labour you get; as a worker, do a full and

careful day's work. Be scrupulously honest in your dealings with those around you, be considerate of their feelings, be unselfish in relation to their interests; and so forth. And when those about you begin to see Christianity with an embroidery like that upon it, they will begin to get back some of the faith they had lost because we had only been in evidence along the talking line.

"If I might venture one or two concluding remarks, let me say, in the first place, that Christianity makes much of man and not a great deal of his circumstances. It does not lower its standard for Cretan slaves; it addresses itself to the humanity that is in every man. It is nothing short of astounding to notice the duties which in these epistles are laid upon persons who were coming directly out of heathenism, and many of whom, like the persons of my text, were of an inferior social standing. Have we not grown accustomed to cheapen man? Do we not tacitly assume that among the poorest and the lowest we can hardly expect the highest virtues? Let us look deeper and see the humanity, I had almost said the divinity, that is in the poorest believer in Christ. . . . Again, let us know and see that the final test of Christianity is found in the character it produces. It is not in our learning, however advanced it may be; it is not in our civilisation, often so mixed and doubtful; it is not in our profession, however loud; it is not in the songs or the prayers we offer, or the ecstatic feelings we cherish —these are part of Christianity as the spray is part of the waterfall—but rather is it in our common life, as men see and estimate it every hour of the day, in the market-place, or in the street, or in the home, that we prove ourselves to be true or spurious. We are to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things, on all days,

in all places; and this poor world, with all its blindness, will soon come to know that a divine heaven-born thing has indeed come down to dwell on earth."

I shall quote next from a sermon mainly to young men upon the great temperance text, "Daniel refused to defile himself," as follows: "In the second place he was far from home. I could imagine Daniel in the midst of Jerusalem as firm as a rock, yet I can imagine this same Daniel making a good excuse for himself in Babylon. He might say 'I am a captive, and I cannot expect nor be expected to live as if I were in Jerusalem, I have not the same influences about me as at home, and I must of course be subject to others. While I am in Babylon I must do as Babylon does. After all, my friends do not see me here, and my influence does not count for much in any case. There is no use being too stiff in one's notions.' That, at least, is the kind of speech many of us would use. Some of you young men in this congregation have been brought up in godly homes, with family prayer night and morning, where you were taught the sharp distinction between good and evil; and now you have come, perhaps not long since, to the town—not exactly to Babylon, but at any rate to a place where, for the size of it, you will find a good many ways of damaging your body and losing your soul. You feel something like a sense of freedom. And you feel the movings of evil within you as did the mother of mankind when she looked at the forbidden fruit upon the tree. And the thought comes into your heart, 'What difference will it make even if I do this? The friends at home will be none the wiser, and it would be a pleasure to myself.' Young man, do not let your mind dally with such thoughts, which come from the devil, or from the lowest

and basest part of your own soul. Remember, God sees you, and if you yield to these unworthy insinuations you may never have any worthy place in this world, and you will make the worst possible preparation for the next. . . . Again, Daniel was tempted by the example of those around him, than which there is nothing more powerful over the lives of young and old. How far the conduct of each of us is shaped by the example of others, and in deference to their wishes, it is impossible for us to say until we begin fairly to look at the question. Some of us, perhaps, who think ourselves very independent will find on examination that we have not a leg to stand on, that we have all our lives been walking on borrowed crutches. We want greatly a little more of the independent spirit of Daniel, that we may not bless things that God has cursed. If you look across the Channel, the whole English nation—or at any rate the majority—follow the lead of the aristocracy; and we imitate them a good deal. If an earl or a duke, or especially a prince, does certain things, even though his sin smite Heaven in the face, it is socially respectable; anything, from church-going to prize-fighting, that is patronised by royalty, is tolerated, and the vice of the high-born may become a terrible factor in the demoralisation of the nation. A few of the papers may growl a little, but most of the people digest their spleen quietly and allow themselves to be led by the nose because the person sits in high places. And what are we better? Do not many of us acquiesce in things that we know to be wrong, because they have got somehow woven into the web of our social life, and some big man does them? And when you are asked why you do them, about the only decent answer you can give is

to point to somebody else and say 'He does it, and he is a good man,' or 'She does it, and she is a good woman.' I would say to young men, I would say to all, I would say to myself, 'Dare to stand alone in the right. Do not follow a multitude to do evil. God will meet you alone some day to get an account from your own lips; let the thought of that interview impress you, and remember God stands by those who stand alone in the right.' . . . You are tempted in these days to defile yourselves, as Daniel was, by strong drink. To take it is one of our social customs. It has become so common that many do not think anything of it, but naturally fall back upon the custom. I think, however, when we consider what strong drink has done and is doing, when we consider the broken hearts, the blighted prospects, the destitute families, and all the poverty caused by it, surely, except this thing has a Divine right to live, the time has quite come for the Church of God, in dependence upon Divine power, to rise in her might and strike it with both hands, and with all the force, human and divine, that she can command. And to you, young men, who are not yet under its spell I would say—Stand back from it, and let this be the fixed purpose of your heart, 'I will not defile myself; I will not voluntarily make a fool or a beast of myself.'

"Do not defile yourself, either, with bad literature. Do not allow any author to drag a mind, that was made for God and for pure thoughts, through the mud. Whenever you have done reading all the good and wholesome and useful books you can get, it will be time to read the weak and vicious ones. If I were a young man to-day in business of some kind, with only a very limited portion of time at my command, I would almost take an oath, I think, to keep off and have nothing to do either with

bad books or weak books. If you ask me what I mean by weak books, I mean books that you would never think of taking up to read a second time. And this is the sort of stuff which many of the novels of the present day actually are. The plot of them heats and strains the mind unnecessarily for nothing. If we were sure of living to be as old as Methuselah, perhaps we might give our holidays to such stuff; but, as matters actually stand, life is very short, and should be practical.

"Look briefly at the results of Daniel's faithfulness and courage. Who is that man that has courage to open his window and pray, though he knows there are spies about, and a den of lions not far off? Who is it that has courage enough to go down into the den of lions, and comes up unhurt, by the power of God who is with him? That is the man who, when he was young, refused to eat the king's meat and drink his wine. If he had yielded here he would never have faced the lions.

"With this life before us then, we can only say, do right, and leave the consequences with God. This man got all he wanted; he lost nothing by his firmness; he rose to the first place in the nation. I make no claim to any prophetic gift, and yet I do not hesitate to say that the young man here who makes Christ his friend, and follows the light of his conscience, will have as much of this world as he needs, and the glory of God hereafter.

"And to those of you who feel that you are defiled, that you are a little too late to take Daniel for your example, who look wistfully back at what you might have been, I tell you you may yet have liberty, and on the very ground where you have fallen you may arise and be victorious. Do not put limits to the power of Christ. He can cleanse your stains and give you power

to live a very different life. I believe it with all my heart, and even now the power of the Lord is present to heal."

The last passage which I shall quote, and more briefly, to illustrate the directness and practical force of Dr. Davey's sermons for the upbuilding of Christian life and character, is from a sermon upon the well-known words of Isaiah xl.—"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength," etc. In speaking of the promise, "They shall mount up with wings as eagles," he says: "The soul fresh from the Divine presence, the soul that has felt the movings of the Divine power upon it, the soul that has been freshly charged with the Divine energy, shall mount up, not like the sparrow that stays about the housetop or the swallow that skims the earth, but like the eagle, who with strong pinion ascends the sky as though he were steering for the sun.

"The soul has wings then; there are winged souls in the world; but some timorous souls are afraid to use their wings. They think man was made altogether to walk the solid earth, and, if he attempt to fly at all, they would have him fly low. They think Paul's ascension to the third heaven a rather hazardous journey. And yet the winged soul must sometimes fly. The dullest, least imaginative, most sensuous Christian on the face of the earth has moments when he feels himself borne up. His faith is strong; the spirit of the Lord comes upon him; his soul is full of the energy of God; his wings expand, and he mounts up before he is aware of it. And he wonders at himself next day, and tries to repeat it, but perhaps he cannot. Have you ever mounted up, and how far have you ascended? How shall we attempt to answer such questions? Is there any principle to

guide us? If the eagle in mid-air had the power of making calculations, he could estimate his distance from the earth by the size of the objects beneath him. When the earthly objects seem large, he is near the earth; when they become small, he is ascending; when he loses sight of them altogether, he is a very long way up. And this method of calculation might well be adopted by us in answering the questions whether we have mounted up at all, and how far. If this earth and the objects on it are very large and very imposing—the largest things your soul has ever seen—then probably you have never used your wings at all; you are only just a child of this earth. But if it looks smaller than it used to do, you have at least one evidence that you have been mounting up; and if there come times when you can soar out of sight of it for a time and forget it, and bask in the rays of another sun, it is probable that you have treasure in heaven and that your life is hid with Christ in God."

SERMON ECHOES

V

SOME Christians when they pray are not like princes who have power with God, but like paupers who are always craving a little bread to meet present distress, and content to go their way when they have got it.

One of the great marks of the divine in our religion is that it has lived in spite of the fact that its professors have only half believed it.

After all, the true criterion of faith is action.

The life of our Lord is good enough for all of us; anything less is not good enough for any of us.

One day you hinted that the preacher was shallow, that you understood perfectly every word he said. Friend, will you ever be saved by a gospel you do not understand?

God has an angel over against every stone in the pathway of love.

Some people are far more anxious to have their sins forgotten than forgiven.

The fact that you can criticise the inconsistencies of professing Christians is a proof that you know what Christianity ought to be. You hate a sham, and you are right; God does the same. But God never asks *you* to be a sham.

CHAPTER XI

THE WRITER

. . . His words were true,
Like the kingly soil in which they grew,
The garden of his heart.

In this chapter I turn from the sermons written by Dr. Davey for preaching to the papers which he wrote for reading. Written for delivery as they stand, they have a literary polish and finality of form which the sermons lack, because they could never be more than a guide to one who preached only from notes. I wish to quote from three of the numerous papers which Dr. Davey has left behind him,—papers which proclaim the same evangel and breathe the same spirit as his sermons, but which have, owing to the circumstance of their being written for reading or publication, received a greater amount of care in the matter of their form. They exhibit his style at its best, though they lack perhaps something of the directness and concrete homeliness of the sermons. Dr. Davey had the gifts of a writer, but his work as a preacher kept them in the background, and he was wise in his decision not to allow literary form to strangle or even curtail the spiritual purpose and direct methods of his preaching. He knew that to read at all you must sacrifice something which the pulpit can never sacrifice without loss; hence in his preaching he kept literary form in a

secondary place as compared with practical values. In these papers, then, we see the same message, in a less colloquial and a more polished setting indeed, but the same message. The power of his preaching can hardly be imagined from the foregoing quotations from the manuscripts of his sermons, but in these papers at least we can get a more faithful picture of his rhetorical gifts, inasmuch as they were written to be read in their present form.

My first quotations in this chapter will be taken from an address upon "Some perils of the present age," given in Ballymena in 1889 to the young men of the Presbyterian Association, and by their request published in Ballymena immediately after its delivery. The foreword reads as follows: "For the appearance of this address in a printed form I am in no way responsible. If anyone, after reading it, feels that he has lost his money or wasted his time, he will have the young men of the Presbyterian Association to blame—not me. For them it was prepared exclusively, with no thought of reaching a wider circle, and for the most part it was written hastily. Should it prove useful to anyone I shall be satisfied, and they will have their reward.—C. D." The address in question dealt with three classes of abuses —social, intellectual, and moral,—with special reference to the following: luxury, the marriage question, demoralising and sceptical literature, religious doubt, irreverence, the quest for pleasure, and the craze for gambling. It will only be possible here to reproduce portions of the address selected and abbreviated; but even so, they will be typical of Dr. Davey's literary method and rhetorical power, and of his religious message as given outside the pulpit, and in a different setting. I quote as follows:

"The age we live in is, indeed, in many respects, a peculiar one, manifesting wonderful activity; and, like every other age, has its own characteristic tendencies. It is an age of discovery. Science advances by leaps and bounds, conquering the earth and heaven, and making them her own; and each fresh inch of ground she takes possession of is something added to the common store—something to learn and to teach. And every lover of progress will rejoice in the acquisitions of science; but he should rejoice with trembling; for who that knows even a little of the character and history of man can deny that such an age has perils peculiar to itself. 'Knowledge puffeth up,' the Good Book tells us, and it does not require any extraordinary degree of penetration on our part to see that the present age is considerably swollen with vanity—in that respect at least it is great. When one of our would-be scientists or theologians takes up the opinions of men of bygone ages to examine them—men more eminent than himself in their day—men to whom he owes it that he can think or write at all on the subject, you would imagine it was a case of Omniscience condescending to examine a schoolboy.

"Always let us remember that if our remote ancestors were only inferior animals, as Darwin and others would lead us to suppose, it is nevertheless true that we have had some ancestors, all of us, not very remote, who had thoughts like ours, and minds like ours, only perhaps a little stronger. Indeed, I doubt if some of them would feel in any way complimented could they be introduced to their more favoured children. If any of us are tempted to think that we carry in our own little heads all the intellect of the race, to read a few good old books, or a little honest history, will completely undeceive us.

"If what I have just said be true in the main of all who live through the present period of the world's history, it is true in a more marked degree of young men. When we are in the stage just between the youth and the man, leaning slightly toward the man, we are a very interesting study to older people, and sometimes not a little amusing too; we are so self-opinionated, so sure about things that older and wiser men have spent their lives in trying to master. Only let a young man at this stage get his fingers upon an idea new to him, and he will think that this same new idea is new to everybody else. He will speak of it as though it were an original discovery, he will call it an 'opinion of his own,' though he may know full well he got it from a book. This is no fanciful picture. Just as surely as children have their season for measles and whooping-cough and other infantile troubles, so surely have youths their season for putting on the man and dreaming dreams of future greatness. You may tell me that all young men do not have these thoughts, or put on these airs. Of course not; all minds are not cast in the same mould. Neither do all children take measles. I mention these things, young men, in no unfriendly spirit, I assure you. I was once a young man myself. And I will permit you at this point if you like—if it ministers in any way to your comfort—to imagine that I am addressing myself—the self of years ago. I merely wish you to know something of the constitution of your own mind, and what you may expect of yourself at certain stages of life; and something too of the world you live in. And for the comfort of any of you who have been attacked by the intellectual fever of the age, who think, because you have taken your first glance into the great field of knowledge, that you

have therefore mastered all its problems, I wish to say that you will likely be well and sane enough in a short time, if in the meantime you will only keep yourself cool. This hard old world you live in will bring you to your senses soon enough.

"But I must hasten without further introduction to speak in a more general way of the perils of the present age. I will divide them into three classes—social, intellectual, and moral. Any one of these would yield quite enough material for an address. I will not therefore attempt to treat my subject exhaustively, but only try to indicate the direction in which I think currents of thought and influence are tending.

"To begin with the social. From the highest to the lowest—throughout the almost infinite gradations of our social life—we clamour, not for the necessaries of life merely, but for its luxuries; the middle class must needs live like princes and prate about hard times if they are obliged to reduce their staff of servants, whilst the upper classes (as we call them) think they are in straitened circumstances if they are obliged to spend more than a few months yearly in any one part of the earth's surface. . . . [I omit the rest of this section for the sake of brevity.—J. E. D.] We shall now enter the sphere of the intellectual, and speak of some of the perils that threaten us in it. Here we are exposed to dangers even greater. In our social life we may still retain our integrity, and live and die without violating in any serious way the laws that bind us to one another; but in the atmosphere in which our intellectual life is born and matured, it is extremely difficult at the present juncture to think soberly and justly. To do so requires judicious management on the part of those who have charge of our early training,

and much care and thoughtfulness on our own part, when afterwards we awake to the great fact that we possess a mind with some of the light and fire of heaven in it. And just here, in faithfulness, I am obliged to say at the outset, that not infrequently the foundation of our troubles in the intellectual sphere is laid at school. We are not educated: we are crammed. Instead of arousing our minds to think and wonder and investigate, and thus make study a pleasant and interesting exercise and a delight, we are taught rather to regard them as receptacles into which so many facts must be deposited in a given time. And if we fail to deposit the given number in the given time, whether the facts are congenial or otherwise, we cover ourselves with disgrace. In this way our minds take a kind of temporary possession of many things, for which they have no liking and over which they have little control, because they find a place in the prescribed course of study.

"I know that it is much easier to find fault in such a case, and rail against the existing order of things, than to suggest a remedy. But surely, in such a connection, it is not too much to say that the primary object in all education is not so much to communicate facts, as to train the mind to think for itself—to arouse the learner, whether old or young, to the significance of the fact that he possesses a mind greater than anything you can put into it. Now this, I am warranted in saying, is about the last thing that is aimed at or thought of in much of our education. The pupil is simply stuffed with facts, his own mind the while being only in a passive or receptive state; and in many cases he has not the most remote idea, nor does anyone condescend to tell him, what it all means or what he is supposed to be

preparing himself for. With a mind thus filled to its utmost capacity with facts of every kind, the youth emerges from school or college. He is educated, at least he is supposed to be: he knows the names of things and the definitions of them: he has, let it be admitted, a large amount of useful information, if only he knew the value of it and how best to use it. His mind is like a vast scrap-book in which are all sorts of good things if he can find them; but he has not learned, in many cases, what, above all things, he should have learned—viz., to think for himself safely and wisely.

"What are the dangers to which this youth is exposed, and to which we are all exposed, in the world of thought? Before attempting to answer this question we must take at least a glance at the world into which we enter. It is a world inundated with literature, a world of books and periodicals and reviews, a world of authors and critics. If the patriarch Job were with us now he would surely have his heart's wish—his enemy would write a book. This literature is of every class—good, bad, and indifferent. There are books, noble in thought and sentiment, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations; and books so bad that Satan himself might be the author of them. This is the world into which each must enter and choose for himself. . . . There is something to suit every kind of taste. If your mind has an affinity for the dark or shady in literature, for a few pence you can purchase a book that will rob you of innocence and purity, and put stains upon your mind that time cannot erase. Young men, remember *there is forbidden fruit upon the tree of knowledge still:* do not cultivate an Eve-like curiosity about it. It may cost you too much. What if you do get to know a little more

about the darkest side of human nature. What advantage would it be to you if, in doing so, you poisoned the fountain of your own life? . . . There is one species of literature especially that I would like to dwell upon, because it is characteristic of the period, and because it has in it much of the strength of the most advanced wave of present-day thought—I refer, of course, to sceptical literature. Some are greatly troubled about this, and more than one or two have asked me the question, 'Why do so many admittedly great and clever men array themselves against the doctrines of the Christian faith?' To me there is nothing very remarkable about this. Education, without changing the heart of man—it is powerless to do that—has furnished him with weapons. And besides, learning, except in the case of the most reverent and humble, begets intellectual pride; and the Creator of man can bear anything in His creature rather than this. He views such afar off. He leaves them to warm themselves in the sparks struck from their own intellect—to walk in the light of their own candle, and play their tricks, until it burn to the socket. 'Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent . . . even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight.'

"Nor do we feel any apprehension with regard to the aggressive movements of scepticism. The issues of the battle are not doubtful. The fortress of Christianity cannot be taken by men, much less by blind men. I would not dare to speak contemptuously, or even uncharitably, of the men of genius who are arrayed against Christianity. I would only say that, within the region swept by the soul, they possess neither the faculty of vision nor the light to guide us. The little child, born from above, has a secret that none of them can find by

means of either microscope or telescope. They can guide us within their own narrow limits, but not beyond them. They can discuss the molecule, and tell you the distance of a fixed star; they can weigh 'the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance'; but they cannot tell you the whereabouts of the Celestial City, or point out the narrow way that leads to it. . . .

"Christianity—experimental Christianity—will undoubtedly save those who possess it from the perils of scepticism. Let a man make proof of the doctrines of Christianity; let him lean upon them with his whole weight, and upon Him who is the author of them—in sunshine and in shade, in calm and in storm—and he will have all the evidence he needs of their divinity. Men of learning, who do not possess his experience, may ask him many questions which he cannot answer; they may perplex his mind with sophisms, but they cannot rob him of the conviction that he has received his sight. . . .

"And again, if you have real difficulties in the mental sphere, not sham ones, but real—for it is becoming fashionable, as you know, either to get or borrow a few little intellectual difficulties to play with—if your mind is in real distress, if you have met with some author who has taken away from you the armour in which you trusted, shaking your soul to its very foundations, I would have you ask such questions as these before you adopt any of his theories—'Does this author shed any fresh light on the greatest problems connected with life and its issues? He speaks against the mysteries of my faith: does he offer me a faith free from mystery? He declares that the foundations on which I am building are not safe: does he lay a better foundation—one more stable

and abiding? I have been taught to believe that my Creator built all these things that I look out upon, but the writer of this book says that he cannot find Him—that things, so far as he can see, built themselves, only he does not profess to know exactly how they set about it at first. Are this man's statements, that will probably be contradicted next week, better than the simple, tested statements of our Christian faith, against which there is not one established fact of science?' If you find on examination, as you certainly will, that your author gives you less light than you already possess upon all the great questions that perplex your soul, and offers no safe foundation upon which you can build for this or another life—why, in the name of common-sense and prudence, should you abandon your faith at the bidding of such an one? Who is he? and what has he done, that he should make such a draft upon your credulity? Let him show himself and give you an example of his power. Let him feed five thousand persons with five loaves and two small fishes, or quiet the storm for you.

"We must often in these days face the alternative that presented itself to Christ's disciples when He asked them the question, 'Will ye also go away?'; and as often as we face it fairly, we shall give the answer of Peter, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? We have looked to every point of the compass and we can see no other refuge from the storm, no other covert from the tempest. We have listened to other prophets of great pretensions, but none of them have spoken to the heart, none of them have lifted the veil of the future as Thou hast done. They have said no kind word about the Father's house above.'

"It does not require much genius to destroy. A

child could spoil a painting by Raphael, or break with his hammer the finest piece of sculpture, the product of years of patient toil. And this points also in a higher sphere to the fact that it is easier to break things than to make them ; easier to pull down than to build ; easier, much easier, to unsettle the human mind than to minister to its peace. And so these unbelieving children of the world, suckled and nursed and educated by the Christian Church, have rewarded her by turning their weapons against her. They have come to us to kill, to steal, and to destroy ; to take away our faith and substitute for it a high-sounding name which signifies—nothing.

"From what I have just said, I think you will agree with me in drawing the conclusion that scepticism, pure scepticism, is abnormal—quite as much as the two-headed calf or the dwarf. Now and then, nature, in one of her funny moods, makes us a monster to stare at. We do not think much of this : we know she is not serious. We never think of judging the whole species by this deviation from the ordinary type. She will right herself again, in a generation or two, we say. In the same charitable way must we treat the purely sceptical person —he is an abnormal growth. He cannot help it perhaps, nor can we ; only let us be careful not to perpetuate the abnormity. Even if blindness should become fashionable, it is the part of wise men, I think, to keep their eyes, and to keep them open.

"If you ask me to account for the fact, then, that scepticism has such a fascination for us, in addition to the reasons embodied in the foregoing, I would say that mankind are usually fickle, and, especially in the morning of life, prefer the new to the old. If you go to a young man of average intelligence and inquiring mind,

whose opinions are not definitely formed on a given subject, and tell him, 'this is what your father and grandfather believed and their contemporaries, but here is another opinion just out—the latest, newest thing in that line—and you can have your choice, taking either the old or the new'—which, think ye, will he take? Probably in the end he will come back to the old; but, for the present, he will take the new to play with, just because it is the fashion.

"I do not say that any opinion or doctrine is necessarily good because it is old, or bad because it is new. I would say, rather, that it is the bounden duty of every wise man to study the tendencies of the age he lives in, and if he find that the existing tendency is to throw overboard all that is old—the true and the false together—he must brace himself to resist the tendency of the age, and endeavour to hold and transmit to coming generations every jot and tittle of what he has received, only yielding on any given point when obliged to do so.

"And therefore, before leaving this part of my subject, the last request I would make of the young men before me is this—that you will *seek to know Christianity itself, before you know what men have said against it.*

"At a dinner-party, not long ago, in the city of London, a lawyer was inveighing against Christianity, and particularly against what he called Calvinism. Just beside him, dressed in ordinary unclerical costume, sat a minister of the Gospel who is well known to most of you. When he had heard about as much of the lawyer's speech as he considered profitable, he ventured to ask him which part of the Calvinistic system of doctrine he specially disliked or disagreed with. At first the lawyer was not disposed to give any answer, but finally, when he was

pressed to give a reason for the faith that was not in him, he said he disliked the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration. I wonder what our old friend, John Calvin, would think of that if he heard it!

"It is not difficult, I submit, to make sceptics—or indeed anything else you like—out of that sort of material. *If you would hold the truth, young men, and defend it, you must first know it;* and making full allowance for the perilousness of the age we live in, from an intellectual point of view, I have no doubt that the reason why some young men lose their hold of Christianity so easily is because they have such a slight hold of it. . . .

"Turning then to the dangers that threaten us in the moral sphere, without attempting either logical sequence or completeness, I would give to the spirit of irreverence the first place. I place it first because it lies near the root of moral character. This irreverence is of two kinds—religious and irreligious. The first I will not dwell upon, because it is not my wish to say anything against even 'the least in the Kingdom of Heaven,' but —Talk of revivals! I wish—and I say it with the New Testament before me, and fronting the great doctrine of the Fatherhood of God—I wish we had a revival of that 'fear of God' which is 'the beginning of wisdom.'

"There is another kind of irreverence, grosser and more material, or, perhaps, it is only the same kind in a lower form; viz., the irreverence of the mind that sees nothing in the universe larger than itself. Never was this species of irreverence more common than to-day. Nor is the genesis of this moral state far to seek. Our age is decidedly materialistic. Men have taken to the investigation of matter and material things, and have found so much at which to look, and about which to

interest themselves, that the powers of the soul—those vast powers that reach out into space and feel for God—have been left in abeyance.

"'Why should we be reverent?' say they. 'In all our investigations we have met with nothing greater, nothing more wonderful than ourselves.' Indeed, the philosophy of a large portion of materialistic thought and speculation might be thus briefly summarized—Be your own God and worship yourself, for there is nothing higher. If man is ever to become what he should be in his attitude toward the Power above him, if he would give full play to his spiritual forces, he must look beyond the spot of earth he stands on, beyond all things seen and temporal, into the Infinite. And he will often do this best by closing his eyes on the finite, and allowing his soul to speak to him in silence. And when we awake from our reverie and look again upon the common things around us, we shall find them touched and transformed with the supernatural, and we can then truly say,

'The earth is filled with heaven, and every tree aglow with God,
But only he who sees takes off his shoes.'

"To souls of every make and mould before me I would say—Fight! Fight with resolute energy against this materialistic spirit that hampers and confines and makes so little of you, and seek that reverence of mind that will teach you to bow with uncovered head before the majesty of Heaven!

"Next to this spirit of irreverence, and in close connection with it, I would put the craving for amusement, and the desire for smooth and pleasant things in the religious sphere. When I speak of the craving for amusement on a large scale, I am looking beyond local

circumstances; I am thinking rather of the large centres of population, in this and other countries, where amusement is treated as one of the fine arts. In all the foremost countries of the civilised world to-day there are thousands of men and women, supposed to be educated, who make amusement their chief business. Lovers of pleasure they are, rather than lovers of God. The theatre, the music-hall, the place of public entertainment,—these constitute their paradise. A quiet, orderly, thoughtful life is, in their estimate, not worth living. I wonder what God and the angels think of these children of folly, as they go forth daily or nightly to mock themselves with things unworthy of them!

"You will tell me that these things do not apply with any appreciable force to us. Perhaps not. But in this case I do not think that we deserve any credit for our abstinence. The place in which we live is too small to supply the gratification of such desires. We are obliged to lead a simpler life; but are not many of us pining for larger places and more liberty? And even here, in the sphere of duty, where force and fibre of character and sober thoughtfulness are most needed, do we not prefer the pleasant to the truthful? The spirit that calls for an actor, a clown, or an acrobat in the larger places, manifests its existence in smaller places by asking for a soft and pleasant theology and a more shallow interpretation of life. We have not the mind or heart to-day to listen to the stern truths that made the Puritans, for example, the men they were. If you tell men now the harder, sterner truths of religion, if you insist that they will be obliged to reap what they are sowing, here or hereafter, 'Oh,' they say, 'this is old Puritan theology!—not suited to the times! Speak smooth things to us;

and if you bring us any message from heaven, let it be a message of love, and let the messenger deliver it apologetically, and, if possible, artistically and beautifully.'

"But is this the kind of teaching the age requires? Is this the sort of message that suits it best? I do not think so. I am strongly of opinion that a self-indulgent luxurious age like ours needs quite another kind of message, and quite another kind of messenger. We require the Baptist back again, with his rough mantle and rough manners, to call us to repentance. We require some Elijah, of fiery speech, to waken our consciences and rouse us from our sloth. Suited to the times indeed! Have the laws of nature altered to suit the times? Assuredly not. Neither has the God who is behind them. . . .

"Young men, form in your hearts the purpose that you will not defile yourselves. Cleave to the Son of God as your Saviour. Put before you the end for which you are here, and let not love of ease or worldly pleasure cut the sinews of your strength, or hold you back from duty. Be men! and remember, that in seeking to attain life's highest purpose, God is on your side."

The next paper I quote, entitled "Making the most of life," was also delivered to young men and boys in the year 1901. The paper is short, and I quote it in full, as it is such a clear declaration of Dr. Davey's own standpoint in relation to business, study, and religion, breathing faith and common-sense throughout, and a spirit of earnestness towards all worthy aspects of life. He was urged to publish it at the time, but his answer as usual was a refusal; he was not working for the applause of men, but for the interests of the Kingdom of God; but, none the less, I think the publication of such

a practical message is well justified in the present memoir. The address runs as follows :—

"We are still in the beginning of the century, and the question may well arise in the mind of each of us, 'How can I make the most of life?' I do not profess to treat this question with any degree of fulness: my hope is that, in a fragmentary way, I may be able to say a few things that will lead some of you to think, and others, who have been thinking, to act. We shall begin by looking at the question from a business point of view. I put this first, not because I consider it most important, but because, as a matter of fact and experience, it usually does come first. For reasons, into which we need not here inquire too closely, most of us are more concerned about this world than we are about the next. And business must be done, whether the work be rough or gentle, work of the brain or of the hand; in harmony with one of the oldest and kindest of our Creator's laws, some kind of work must be done by each of us. And it is a perfectly legitimate question for a young man to ask, 'How can I make the most of my life from a business standpoint? How can I secure success?'

"My first word of counsel to such is, that you must make sure that you have got into the proper place. Before we begin to talk of success or failure we must ascertain, as far as it is possible to do so, whether we are in the place for which we were intended. The reason why thousands of men fail in business is not because they are lacking in industry or energy, but because they have succeeded in getting into the wrong place. If your choice of a calling has not yet been made, let me beg of you to exercise the utmost care. You will use to the utmost extent the intelligence God has given you; you

will seek the guidance of older and wiser people than yourselves; but above all, when you have weighed the pros and cons, and the day has come to make your final decision, you must see to it that you commit your way to God by an act of conscious trust; otherwise you may make a mistake you can never remedy. He alone knows both what you are and what it is possible for you to become, what latent talent lies buried in each of you, and therefore He alone can fix your place in life.

"Having found your position and your calling, you must get to like it. There is no sound work done by any of us where the will is absent. And we cannot work with a will if we dislike our work. If whilst we are engaged about it we are always longing for the evening, or the hour of release, that we may do something or go somewhere else, then we do not like our work, and we are almost certain not to succeed in it. But if, on the other hand, your life's work has been carefully chosen, there seems to be no reason why you should not come to like it, and if you persevere you will. Only let the thought take possession of you that you are filling the place for which you were intended; that a higher intelligence than your own placed you there, and it will go far to give you satisfaction in it.

"And if you are in your place, and like your work and persevere in it, what may be said to constitute success? When can a man be fairly said to have made the most of life from a business standpoint? You will be tempted to say, 'When he has accumulated wealth, or is in the fair way to do so.' I demur entirely to this conclusion. A man may be truly successful in the best sense who is neither wealthy nor ever likely to be. No sensible person will despise wealth; no educated person will seek it for

its own sake. Man is not a wealth-producing machine; he has a soul as well as a body; a future as well as a present. If he occupies the place for which he is best fitted, and loves his work, and possesses enough of this world's goods for comfort, he has probably succeeded in life as well as most men can afford to succeed. There are things of greater moment than material property.

"Rising a step higher, we might with profit look at the matter from an intellectual point of view. I cannot here do more than touch upon a subject so large, but I could not evade it. You are young, and in the intellectual sphere, now or never, you must lay the rails upon which you are to travel. In these days of progress and intellectual awakening, with such vast stores of knowledge easily accessible to us, it is a reproach to a young man if he does not seriously attempt the cultivation of his mind. To some of you this will be a comparatively easy task, and quite in your line of things; to others it will mean sacrifice and require constant effort. You are in business, and your margin of time for such pursuits is strictly limited. If you are to make any progress in the cultivation of your mind, you must be careful of time. It is your chief capital. You must separate yourselves rigidly from those who have no special object in life. Indeed, if you are disposed to make the most of the mental gifts with which you have been endowed, you must deny yourself to some extent even the luxury of doing good. To the young man gifted with spiritual sight, the world will often seem to be rushing to destruction; and his first impulse will be to give every available unit of time and energy for its salvation. I should be sorry to lessen the enthusiasm of any of you, but I would remind you that you may do more by doing less; and

that it is your sacred duty at the present stage of your life to give yourself resolutely to the cultivation of whatever mental powers you possess.

"That this is no easy task I am quite prepared to admit. At first you may be obliged to do it from a sense of duty. It would be so much easier when your day's work is done to sit down and rest, or join your friends in talking over the last item of news in the daily press, or go to some public meeting. Such things cost little; but think what you are losing! Think of the company you might have, of the converse you might hold with the greatest and wisest of all the ages. Think of the stores of knowledge you might accumulate. And remember it is now or never with you; you have just the one life; and if you do not think and read and accumulate information now, you will have lost your chance.

"But do not attempt the impossible. You need not beat out your brains against the bars of your cage. There is a good deal of the romantic in each of us, and most of us have dreams in youth that there is no reasonable hope of converting into realities. You cannot master everything. You must try to make your thought and study bear in the main upon your life-work. And you need not let your conscience trouble you if you cannot read everything that is recommended to you. Most of the books that are coming through the press will not live more than twelve months. Make it a point therefore to read only those that have survived and are likely to survive. Read no bad books; there are more good ones than your time will suffice for. Read thoroughly those that you do read, keeping ever in view your life's purpose; and remember that even God Himself prefers sharp instruments when He can get them.

"There is another sphere of life about which I would like to add a few closing words. We should seek to make the most of life from a religious point of view. What has been said about business and mental culture should have due weight with us. But there is something higher. There is a spirit in man. He has within him that which takes hold upon eternity. The revelation we have received from God makes us more responsible than persons less happily circumstanced, because it brings within the range of our vision another world, and makes the present life only the beginning of things. If man had no certain revelation about the future, it would still be his duty to make the most of his physical and mental life; but if he possesses a revelation full and clear, informing him that he has a future, and that its peace and happiness and elevation are dependent upon the present, the whole course of his life must be shaped in harmony with these facts. Such is our case.

"And a man is not making the most of life, however intellectual he may be, and however industrious, if in making his life's plans he can leave out Eternity. He makes too little of himself; the dimensions of life are too narrow. Is there anything stranger and sadder to a thoughtful mind than the attitude of the average man toward the spiritual and eternal aspects of human life? That men should care so little about the next life as not to inquire about it or seek preparation for it, whilst they still profess to believe in it, is a first-class mystery. I cannot make myself feel sufficient astonishment at it. If virtue and vice were going to lie down and sleep their last long sleep together, and have no waking, we might eat and drink and be merry, and forget our immortality; but if the future overshadows the present, and the judge

already standeth at the door, if we are sowing for an eternal harvest, in the name of all that is sacred, let us look up and seek to live a life worthy of our humanity and of the Christian redemption."

The third paper from which I shall quote was delivered as a lecture to a gathering of young men about the year 1892, and bears the title "Some aspects of the religious thought and life of to-day." The manuscript runs to some fifty pages, and I can only quote selections. "It is generally admitted," he begins, "that the time we live in, from a religious point of view, is a time of sifting and transition. Strenuous efforts are being made over the whole field of religious knowledge to find the truth and separate the wheat from the chaff. So strenuous are these efforts, and so violent in some instances are the means employed toward this end, that there is great danger of driving away the wheat and the chaff together. It is confidently asserted by men whose learning and ability constitute their right to be heard, that we are advancing from the old positions and leaving the old landmarks behind us. If such statements are not the utterances of mere alarmists, if they have about them any semblance of truth, it is the duty of all who are interested in revealed religion, and especially of those who take it upon them to guide the thoughts and influence the lives of others, to seek to ascertain how far these things are so.

"I am not going to take upon me the ambitious task of setting everybody right, nor is it my intention to attempt in a single lecture to cover the whole field of religious thought and action. I have spoken of *some* phases, and I intend dealing only with some of them, confining myself for the most part to such as may be

profitable, without any rigorous regard to logical sequence. Taking a general view of the religion of our time, most of the features or phases of it upon which I wish to fix attention are the product of one cause—what I shall venture to call shallowness. I do not ask you to take my word for this. Take, for example, the question of sin. To know sin in its height and depth, to see its darkest features in their true colouring, we must see it in the light of the goodness and love and purity of God. However we may attain to it, I would emphasize the fact that right views of the whole system of divine truth will depend largely upon the answer we give to this question; and, if I mistake not, many of the small heresies of our time owe their existence to the fact that the professing Christian Church has practically endorsed a shallow and insufficient view of the great doctrine of sin.

"Popular language in any community is a better guide to the general belief, or the direction of thought, than any professed faith or subscription of a creed. And it is characteristic of the period in which we live to speak of sin and of the sinner almost exclusively in the language of pity. He is the slave of circumstances, we say, —the victim of heredity. We shed tears over him. We vie with one another in saying tender and gracious things about him. We try to persuade him that the Saviour of men can hardly do without him; that Heaven will lack something of its brightness if he is not there.

"Do not think I object to the element of pity in our attitude toward the sinful. It is pitiful indeed to see a race of beings, made to be pure and free, corrupted in their faculties and dragged at the chariot-wheel of their enemy. But we must look at the whole case, not at one

aspect of it; and if we do so, I venture to think we shall have other thoughts and feelings besides those of pity.

"We dare not impute unrighteousness to God. Heaven and earth are called to witness that He has nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against Him. And if you look abroad upon the earth, and tell me in pathetic tones of the blood and tears that have flowed in consequence of sin, of all the ills that flesh is heir to here, and of the wrath that man is treasuring up for himself in another state, I admit it all, and more—the case is sadder, I believe, than words can paint it,—yet I dare to tell you that our fall has cost Him more than it has cost us. The sin and the guilt are ours; the sacrifice and the suffering, His. And where, I ask, where is our sympathy with God?

"That we should incline to think of sin as it affects ourselves, and overlook the higher thought of its relation to God, is perhaps not unnatural. Its bitter fruits, the pain it causes, the sorrow it brings, are things that we find without seeking; they are ever before us, they darken all our life; and the God against whom it is directed seems out of sight and far away, and it is not always easy to lift our dull souls up to the thought of the Psalmist, 'Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned and done this evil in Thy sight.' Along this way, however, lies the secret of a deeper Christianity. We must lift our thoughts to God; we must gaze upon His immaculate purity; we must enter into sympathy with eternal justice, and judge ourselves in Heaven's pure light, if we would know the depth and height of human transgression, and appreciate the great redemption of which we are the recipients."

At this point the speaker goes on to call upon some witnesses from the old and sterner days of our fathers;

Boston, Owen, Rutherford, Bunyan, are quoted in turn as bearing testimony to a sense of sin all too rare in our day. He next quotes Thomas Carlyle as one of the more serious prophets of these latter days; then he gives at length Lord Macaulay's magnificent tribute to the Puritans, and to the almost superhuman strength with which their sense of sin and of grace endowed them. At this point (following the quotation from Lord Macaulay), I quote again: "A materialistic, irreverent age like ours, devoted to its yellow-backed novels and its light, unhealthy pleasures, can hardly be expected to appreciate at their full value such words as I have just read in your hearing. In the following it might find something more after its own heart. I will read you a bill of which some of you may have received copies. The place in which it was issued is only a few hours' journey from here. It reads as follows :—

> 'This (Sunday) afternoon, July 31st, 1892,
> at three o'clock,
> the world-renowned and only MEXICAN JOE (Col. Joe Shelley)
> will tell the story of his life, or twenty years fighting the redskins and desperadoes of the Wild West. He will also introduce his entire company, consisting of famous scouts, hunters, cowboys, frontiersmen, and Western girls, war Indians with their squaws, and the old historical Tombstone stage-coach, of which he will give an interesting account. The cowboys will also render sacred songs and solos. Mexican Joe's famous cowboy band will give selections of sacred music at intervals; in all making a very enjoyable Sabbath afternoon.'

"With due respect for many good people, I am inclined to think that this pleasant Sunday afternoon business in the name of religion has gone nearly far enough. If Peter, and Paul, and John, and Rutherford,

and Bunyan, and Christ Himself are right in their estimate of man's present position and future prospects, most men will require to have not a few unpleasant Sunday afternoons before they will have any reasonable hope of seeing God.

"Assuming that I am right in the main in my contention that religion is shallower than it used to be, certain results may be expected to follow, and this is one of them—a religion that makes little of sin cannot, for example, make much of atonement. And this, as a simple matter of fact and history, is the position toward which there is a general movement.

"The old teaching is said to be a religion of 'blood' and 'butchery,' and some have gone the length of calling it 'barbarous'; suited well enough, they generously admit, to the infancy of the race, when men and women had hardly learned the use of clothes, and the human mind was wholly untutored. It has had its day, however: before fuller light, higher culture and gentler feeling it must go.

"Now it is not denied by the most orthodox that God loved men prior to the descent of Christ into the world, or that the coming of the Son of God and His life and death are manifestations of that love. It is denied, and with good reason, that this is all, or the substance of all, the scriptures teach concerning this stupendous fact of Christ's obedience unto death.

"We are here face to face with one of the profoundest theological questions—namely, Why was atonement necessary?—a question that would lead us far beyond the limits of this lecture, and upon which, moreover, I do not think it expedient to enter, farther than to say that the fact that the just and holy One died, that blood

so precious was shed at all, with a righteous God on the throne of the universe, is in itself strong proof of the necessity for it."

The next section of the paper discusses the questions of eschatology, and occupies fourteen pages ; it is written with the same vigour and the same religious earnestness ; but I think it better, in the interests of brevity, to omit it as a whole, and to pass on to the concluding pages, with which I shall close this chapter, and which run thus : "Leaving these hard theological topics, there is one phase of our religious life concerning which, in conclusion, I should like to say a word ; and I shall try not to weary you. I am at a loss to know how best to designate this phase. The name you affix to it will depend upon the standpoint from which you look at it. Some call it tolerance, and some apply to it the sacred name of charity. You will recognise the thing even if I should misname it.

"Tolerance is the order of the day in matters religious. First of all, in the choice of a religion you need not be over-particular, it is said. You may be a Buddhist, or a Theosophist, or a Christian, or anything else you like, with equal propriety and safety, provided you are sincere—they are all torches kindled at the same central light. And if you cannot believe in any religion, if you are of opinion that no light better than a will-o'-the-wisp has yet blessed the vision of any mortal ; if you believe that human ears have never yet heard any voice from the still, far-off eternity—that human ears were not intended to hear such sounds—you may cover your imperfections, your blindness and deafness, with a learned word, and call yourself an Agnostic. That will pass for a sort of religion, will in fact in some circles be considered

a superior sort of religion. I am not stating what has become the language of the street; I am stating in crude form the position of men and women who aspire to lead the thought of our time. A competent and well-informed religious weekly tells us that most of the popular writers of the day, who have the ear of the British people, do not even profess Christianity.

"Confining our attention to the Christian Church, the same spirit proclaims itself in this wise: 'One sect is as good as another. You need not be seriously exercised as to which section of the Christian Church you adhere to.' Now, I am no bigot. No man can blame me for drawing denominational lines too sharply. I can see a deal of good and evil in nearly all the sects. I can understand the man who advocates a common platform on which all can meet, who sees the great outstanding principles of religious truth, held by all the evangelical Churches, and says, and says truly, that these are more important than the questions that men have magnified to the division and detriment of the Church of God. I can even understand the man who, looking out upon Christendom, or parts of it at least, as it now is, and seeing the various sects snarling at each other, and spending such strength as they possess in each seeking to further its own interests at the expense of its neighbour,—I can understand a truly Christian man or woman saying, 'One of these is as good as the other, or as bad; I will stand off from each and all of them, and try to live my allotted span of time in communion with Him who died and lives for me, until I am called hence.' I can understand that position, though I do not commend it; I do not think it either Scriptural or practicable. Far less do I commend the working out of it, which

usually means the addition of another little sect, narrower, more exclusive, and more rapacious than any of its predecessors.

"These, however, are not the persons about whom especially I wish to speak here; there are others in the community, in large and ever-increasing numbers, who have not enough interest in religious matters to know or care what truths the various sections of the Christian community hold in common, and why on given points they separate from one another; who have not enough genuine heart-interest in the Kingdom of God to hate the dividing elements that men have brought into it; who in spiritual things are utter strangers to any belief that affects the heart or moulds the life, and who, when opportunity offers, prostitute their professed religious belief to their own pleasure or advantage, and change their denomination as easily as they do their outer garments. These are the persons who prate about tolerance and charity, and about one form of religion being as good as another. Who has not met with such? Who has not seen this evil grow up rank and strong before his eyes? And where is the sincere soul to-day that cannot join in a prayer for the return of the Son of Man, with His scourge of small cords, to drive this thing forth from His house?

"To make our thought concrete, there is a young man with a painfully tall collar, a ring on his finger, and a silver or gold-headed walking-stick in his hand—the fashionable young man of the period. There, I say, he stands before you just as his tailor made him, and declares that he can worship no longer in the Church of his fathers. And why not? Because her enthusiasm has died out; her light has grown dim; her prophets have lost their vision? Oh, no! his reasons are purely æsthetic. Her

church buildings are not sufficiently modern; her service is too simple; her music is not quite up to the level of his culture. There he stands, and the very existence of him would make one hesitate about rejecting the Darwinian hypothesis. Half a dozen such creatures have not enough religion to save the soul of the remotest of Darwin's ancestors. Do not mistake me; I am not against good architecture, or a service as elaborate as Christian truth and common-sense will admit; nor am I in any wise opposed to the use of the finest music in the worship of God; on the contrary, I think some of our churches are stupidly at fault here. But to make our allegiance to a section of the Christian Church, that has a thousand other claims upon us, dependent exclusively upon such things as these, is to manifest gross ignorance of the very meaning and purpose of religion.

"Take another case. Here is a man of business, a man who has made a place for himself in the world. In life's race he has outdistanced most of those who started with him. Perhaps he glories in the privilege of writing several letters to the end of his name. He, too, discovers that he cannot conveniently worship God in the old Church; that the religion of his father is hardly suitable for him. I cannot pretend to analyse the secret workings of such a mind, or indicate the various steps by which he reaches this conclusion. But I will tell you what men say of him. They say he wanted to increase his business, and that, from that point of view, he found another Church that offered greater advantages; that he wanted to move in a higher social circle in closer harmony with his new-found greatness; that he had sons and daughters whose settlement in life he was obliged to consider. And so, on a trifling pretext, one fine morning, to the great joy

of his family, he changed his place of worship, so making the thing that God had given for his salvation a mere instrument of earthly advantage. And thus men act, and talk of charity and tolerance!

"In saying these things, let it be distinctly understood that there is no reference, general or special, to any particular Church as such. What applies to one here applies to another yonder. I merely wish you to look and see what men are doing in the name of religion, and how, in the world of business and of fashion, men's very souls are made merchandise of.

"Your remedy for all this, young men, and your chief protection against all the other evils we have dwelt upon, is to penetrate deeper into these matters, deeper into the unexplored depths of your own nature, that you may know what you are and whence; deeper into the religion you profess, that its spirit may permeate and vitalize you, and lift you above the human herd around, who eat and sleep and worship Mammon.

"And when, by the kindly aid of Heaven, and the exercise of such powers as God has given, you awake to the importance of the things of the spirit, you will find that the old religion, which in former times appealed to men's senses in cloudy pillar, and blaring trumpets, and voices that shook the earth, is still with us, though in milder mood, and 'God is in the midst of her.'"

CHAPTER XII

CONCLUSION

On Sunday, 6th November, 1921, a memorial window was unveiled in Fisherwick Church in remembrance of Dr. Davey's ministry in that congregation. Mrs. Davey unveiled the window in the presence of a large congregation, and the memorial sermon was preached by the Rev. R. W. Hamilton, M.A., of Lisburn, an old and intimate friend of Dr. Davey. The Rev. John Waddell, M.A., Dr. Davey's successor in the pastorate of the congregation, also took part in the service, and the dedicatory prayer was offered by the Rev. D. A. Taylor, D.D., who had so often given his help in the work of the congregation during the days of Dr. Davey's illnesses.

The memorial window in question, of which a photographic reproduction is here given, "consists of two lights, and represents 'The Resurrection'; and the white-robed figure of the risen Christ, surrounded by a pale golden glory, dominates the whole composition. Above, two angels watch the scene, while below a group of Roman soldiers are starting back in consternation from the empty tomb. The drawing of all the figures is very fine, that of our Lord being especially beautiful, and the whole treatment of the window is thoroughly in sympathy with the subject. The figure portion is enclosed by an architectural frame of Gothic character,

Photo by A. R. Hogg, Belfast

MEMORIAL WINDOW IN FISHERWICK CHURCH

and immediately below is placed the text, 'I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live,' and across the base of the window is a scroll with the inscription: 'To the glory of God, and in loving memory of Charles Davey, B.A., D.D., third minister of Fisherwick congregation, 1900–1919.' The work was carried out by the local firm of Messrs. Ward and Partners."

In the course of the sermon, prior to the unveiling, upon the words of Acts xi. 4 (describing Barnabas), "He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith," Mr. Hamilton paid a very warm and eloquent tribute to the person and work of him whom they were met together to remember and honour that day. I quote his words in what follows: "He was a man of supreme kindness, of much tolerance, and of wide charity. He was utterly devoid of self-seeking or self-aggrandisement, being ever animated by the purest, loftiest motives. For him to live was Christ; and during his wide and ample ministry he was truly a son of consolation and encouragement to multitudes. Earnest loving persuasion, tender sympathy with wounded, bleeding hearts, the attractiveness, heroism, and joys of the Christian life here and hereafter—these were outstanding elements in the powerful preaching of your late beloved pastor.

"God fitted Charles Davey for specially heavy and laborious work; He gave it to him, and His servant willingly and bravely undertook the tasks committed to him. He took his vocation most seriously; he gave himself to it most strenuously. When one looks back over the life and work of the Church during the past thirty-seven years or more, he feels constrained to ask whether any other man fulfilled a wider or more fruitful

ministry. In our own Church we have had more brilliant men, we have had many men much more conspicuous in Church courts, but it is questionable whether any other man wielded so salutary and blessedly fruitful an influence for the Kingdom of God, over so wide an area, as he whom we gratefully remember to-day.

"When yet a student, he went with Robert Montgomery over many parts of the country as evangelist, and wherever he went he made a deep and lasting impression. There was a sincerity about him, a human tenderness, a modesty and a massive good sense, an absorbing earnestness and a sweet persuasiveness, that caused men and women, young and old, to hear him gladly, and made him the fitting channel through which the Divine spirit spoke effectually to many hearts and lives.

"There is not a place he thus visited—and he visited many places during a number of years—where you will not find persons who to this day gratefully cherish his memory. And after his ordination, and all through his ministerial life, he went out from time to time to evangelise, and wherever he went crowds gathered to listen to this plain man, full of the Holy Ghost and of faith, as he powerfully presented the urgency of the claims of Christ as the only Saviour from sin and the rightful Lord of the life.

"As already said, God gave him specially heavy tasks. As a young man he was ordained in the large and important congregation of First Ballymena; and, after a strenuous ministry there of about four and a half years, he was called to St. Enoch's to be assistant and successor to the Rev. Dr. Hugh Hanna; and only a few weeks after his installation Dr. Hanna suddenly died and left him

in full charge of that great congregation. Had he not been one of the strongest men in Ulster, strong in every way, he could not have done the great work he did in St. Enoch's, greatly extending and building up the huge congregation, and from its spacious pulpit radiating forth a spiritual influence of the highest and wholesomest kind, far beyond the bounds of that congregation or of Belfast. And when, through the death of that evangelical prophet, that single-eyed man, the Rev. Dr. H. M. Williamson, your pulpit here became vacant, you called the Rev. Charles Davey to be your minister, all who knew the facts believed that no other man was better fitted to fill the place that had been occupied first by Dr. James Morgan and afterwards by Dr. Williamson. He stepped worthily into this good succession ; and how worthily he maintained it, during more than eighteen years, is written deep on the hearts of many here to-day, and the same was true of many others, no longer with you, for whose pilgrim way he was as sunshine and an Atlantic breeze.

"It is not for me to tell you of the many-sided activities of Dr. Davey in this congregation, or indeed of the many-sidedness of the man. I have, perhaps, already unduly presented him as an evangelist. But he was far more. He was a model pastor. His visitation was phenomenal, and the genial, gentle, sympathetic spirit of the big man made him one whom, in your joys and sorrows, you loved to see. He was a great teacher. His preaching was not mere exhortation ; it was teaching, edifying, building up. He brought out of his ample treasury things new and old. He did not give you what cost him little. There was no more diligent student of the Bible and of cognate literature, no one more inter-

ested in the movements of his time, and none who took a saner view of the pressing problems that exercised men's minds. His was a well-balanced mind, and his outlook by no means narrow or circumscribed. But for him the things of the Kingdom of Christ ever stood first, and by them indeed he gauged and tested all things. In a time of mental and theological unrest and transition, he was by no means contemptuous of all change, or intolerant of reasonable criticism. He was too large in head and heart to be afraid of truth, and gladly welcomed light from any quarter. But his personal relation to Christ was so real, and vivifying, and illuminating, that he walked surely and securely on paths of whose solidity he was thoroughly convinced and assured. Therefore, there was no uncertainty about his message to you. It was ever a message tested thoroughly in the crucible of his own keen and penetrating mind, and verified in the manifold experiences of life.

"Preaching the Gospel cost him immensely more than most men, and therefore his message was ever a weighty one, charged with conviction, instinct with loving passion, and presented with the tenderness of a big man's heart, full of winsome persuasiveness, absolutely free from anything like flippancy or sensationalism. Nor was his any cramped or narrow gospel; it was full-orbed, suited to Greek or barbarian, learned or unlearned; the educated and thoughtful got ample food for thought and helpfulness; and it could be said of him, as of his Lord, that the common people heard him gladly.

"Dr. James Denney once wrote these words: 'The person whom Christ needs for His work, whether at home or abroad, is the person who is enthusiastically sure that he has in Christ that without which life has no

value.' That literally describes your late minister; and it was that enthusiastic sureness about the incomparable value of the things of the Kingdom of Christ that gave power and potency to his great ministry here and elsewhere.

"To-day we all unite to honour and thank God for the memory of one whose high Christian character, earnestness, and elevation of purpose, incomparable singleness of mind and devotion to his Lord, and utter absence of all that was petty and unworthy, made it easier for us to live the good life and fight the good fight. We bless God to-day for the memory, enshrined in many hearts, of this good man, 'full of the Holy Ghost and of faith.'"

The end has now been reached of this our labour of love, this our imperfect sketch of a great worker in the vineyard of God. It is hoped that what has been written may strengthen and add to the memories which linger in so many hearts. And yet we feel that, for those who knew Dr. Davey, his memory needs no such record; it is enshrined in the secret places of the soul. His words have lived and will live, many of them; his deeds have left an ineffaceable impress on souls in all parts of this earth; but, beyond all he said or did, there abides what he *was*. His real greatness was in his personality, so many-sided, so balanced, so complete, in its strength, its tenderness, its sincerity, its humility, its courage, its common-sense, its breadth, and its enthusiasm. Assuredly death is not the end of such a life. His last sermon upon earth was full of the Psalmist's great phrase, "When I awake I am still with Thee"; and it is in that certainty that our hearts find rest.

His was no easy life. His compassion and sympathy, his high-strung temperament, his unstinting enthusiasm for his work, all made the way a hard one; and the illnesses of his later days could not but increase tremendously the burden which he carried. But he chose the harder way, with open eyes, because it was the better way. As he once said to the listening congregation, "Some of you have chosen between good and evil, but there is yet a further choice to be made—the choice between the good and the better." His own life was a continual choosing of the better: he could be satisfied with nothing, in his own life and work, which was not at its highest and best.

Thus, life for him, with all its great opportunities and abundant blessings, was none the less a toilsome and thorny path; but he trod it cheerfully and bravely to the end. Even in the deepest hours of depression, during his times of illness and weakness, the chief consolation which he found in himself was the knowledge, "I am trying to do my best, and that is all that God asks or that man has the right to expect." All through his ministry, in thought, word, and deed, he kept the same exalted level of thoroughness, devotion, and faith in the Unseen; in everything, he chose God's best—whatever the cost—as one who was a stranger and a pilgrim on the earth. Surely they who so live, as we read in the Epistle to the Hebrews, "declare plainly that . . . they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city"—a very favourite passage of his, whether for public or private reading.

In the noble verses put by Mrs. Cousins into the mouth of the dying Samuel Rutherford, occur the

beautiful lines referring to his work for God in Anwoth by the Solway :—

> "Oh, if one soul from Anwoth
> Meet me at God's right hand,
> My heaven will be two heavens
> In Immanuel's land!"

That joy of the true shepherd of souls will assuredly, and in manifold measure, be his, who has now passed from us within the veil, that he may be numbered among the faithful witnesses of Jesus Christ, who "shall walk with Him in white: for they are worthy."

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